

**2008**

**Dropout Prevention Grant Recipients**  
**Program Evaluation**  
**Final Report**

**Presented by**

**The North Carolina Committee on Dropout Prevention**

**Prepared by**

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# **2008 Dropout Prevention Grant Recipients Program Evaluation**

## **Final Report**

### **Executive Summary**

#### **Description**

In 2008, the General Assembly of North Carolina approved additional funding for dropout prevention, continuing Session Law 2007-323, which established the North Carolina Committee on Dropout Prevention (NCCDP). The \$7 million funding in 2007 was increased to \$15 million, and allocated to 123 agencies, including 39 of the original 2007 grantees. These funds were used to extend 2007 grant programs or to begin new dropout prevention programs for the 2008-2009 school year. Since the program's inception, North Carolina's dropout rate has steadily declined. In the 2008-2009 school year, the dropout rate fell to 4.27%--the lowest dropout rate ever recorded in North Carolina (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2010).

#### **Understanding outcomes in broader perspective reform initiatives**

Dropout prevention outcomes can best be understood as they relate to the broader perspective of education initiatives in general. When educational systems endeavor to retain students in school so that they will graduate and become productive citizens, many milestones must be met toward that end. Dropout prevention can be understood in terms of the framework provided by the Race to the Top initiative. This will facilitate understanding how all these initiatives relate. Any achievement toward one end dovetails and plays an integral role in the other.

The four pillars of Race to the Top include great teachers and principals, quality standards and assessments, turnaround of lowest-achieving schools, and data systems to improve instruction. All four of these pillars support essential elements of the dropout prevention program. Perhaps the most important of the four pillars is the requirement for data systems, in particular, what we will refer to as the 21st century

Data Pillar. In the past, education reform initiatives operated in the at-risk model. Certain subgroups of students were targeted as a whole and provided services because these groups were thought to be at risk. The 21st century Data Pillar operates in direct opposition to the at-risk model often prevalent in programs designed to improve performance. This Data Pillar helps agencies determine the problems and find possible solutions by aligning services for individuals; and using an information management system to document services, provide accountability, and measure success.

The 2008 grants had already been awarded when EDSTAR was hired to be the evaluator, but most grantees had not yet begun providing services. EDSTAR provided technical assistance to help the grantees write SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) outcomes and target individuals. Grantees did not change the services they were providing, but articulated much more clearly in terms of the individual characteristics of whom they would target for those services, and how they would measure success. Program staff decided what data they would use to target students and measure success. EDSTAR provided technical assistance to agencies to help them understand how to use data to determine whom to target.

Overall, 26% of the programs met every aspect of the four pillars provided in Race to the Top, as well as adhering to the principles laid out in the government's Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART). The PART system assigns scores to programs based on services being related to goals, showing that the goals are appropriate for the individuals served, and student success measured against quality standards and assessments. PART rates programs that cannot demonstrate whether they have been effective or not because of lack of data or clear performance goals with the rating "Results Not Demonstrated." Currently, nearly half (47%) of U.S. Department of Education grant programs rated by the government are given this rating, thus illustrating the difficulties of making this transition to outcome based accountability.

These programs that complied with the four pillars have been identified as promising programs to share with other LEAs and agencies for consideration. An additional 28% of the programs did not meet the benchmarks they set in their SMART outcome, yet they served significant numbers of students with valuable services, and many achieved the goals set. These programs could be termed “moderately effective.” They used data properly, there were reasonable connections between data used to target students and to measure success, and much progress was made. Thirty two percent of the programs met their objectives, but did not have clear connections between data used to target students and to measure success, benchmarks were not significant, or there was no clear connection between the outcome and achieving standards for graduation. Of these 32%, 14% met their benchmarks and 18% did not. Nine percent of programs either discovered that students had already exceeded the benchmarks prior to service, or set unattainable benchmarks. The remaining 5% did not have SMART outcomes.

From the promising programs, we have identified six that have been funded for a fourth year and may be developed into models to share with other agencies and LEAs. Two of these programs will require additional technical assistance for documenting program components well enough to serve as models, while four may be proven programs to consider for replication. The NCCDP Co-Chairs, EDSTAR, and North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) will review these programs further to discuss internal and external validity, and to decide whether criteria for replication have been met. An additional six programs were funded for a third year and have been identified as promising. These programs will be reviewed further to determine whether they are appropriate to consider for replication, or if additional technical assistance is required.

## **Grantees**

Of the 123 agencies awarded the 2008 grants, 42 are LEAs, 17 are schools (including 3 colleges), 47 are non-profits, 4 are faith-based, and the other 13 include government agencies such as social services and a local police department, as well as YMCAs and other institutions. Most grantees worked in collaboration with local agencies to provide a wider variety of services than grantees could provide alone.

## **Accountability**

Accountability has continued to improve with 118 of the 123 grantees (95%) providing SMART Outcomes, nearly all of which were suitable. This represents a significant improvement from 2007, when only 27% of agencies used pre- and post-data for individuals served to measure progress for desired outcomes. When compared to the Department of Education, with 47% of grants not able to be rated, the figure of 95% becomes relatively more impressive. For the purposes of this report, all discussions of outcomes include only those that can be properly assessed.

## **Program Descriptions**

Accountability and transparency have been greatly increased by organizing each grantee's information and posting it to EDSTAR's website. This also allows staff to collaborate and share information from each other's reports. NCDPI will provide a link so that the reports can be read by the public as well.

## **Staff**

Research shows that using regular teachers from students' schools in curricular programs outside of school times is one of the most efficient strategies to improve academics (Fashola, 1998). Appropriately, most of the permanent staff who worked directly with students were teachers. Community members were the next largest component, although some of these were one-time guest speakers. Parent volunteers made up another large component of regular staff members. Students, including

participants, peers, and college students, provided the second largest cadre of volunteers (after community members).

## **Services provided**

Most of the services were provided directly to the students. Programs could be classified into three primary types: targeted to specific students or groups, school-wide, and larger than school-wide, although some grants supported both a targeted component and a larger component. The school-wide and larger categories are considered “non-targeted” services and, although beneficial, can be more difficult to gauge directly, as many students may reap benefits that are not measured.

Although a variety of targeted services were provided to students, many were designed to change factors that support academic success. Academics and personal behavior were the top two services provided. Nearly all agencies (85% and 87%, respectively) provided services to address these issues.

Sixty-three percent of agencies provided non-targeted services. Often, grantees had no way of gauging participation, but many students benefitted. Ninth grade academies, orientations, and other transition services were some of the non-targeted services provided. Across all the grantees, approximately 70,000 students benefitted from non-targeted services.

Additionally, services were provided to staff, usually as professional staff development. Families were also involved. Many services were provided to them, such as workshops and orientations.

## **Students served**

Of the 16,425 targeted students served, 51% were male and 49% were female. The majority of students served were in 9th grade. Some grantees also included services for pregnant girls and teen parents. A total of 711 pregnant girls and teen parents were served.

## **Budgets**

Last year, new budget forms were designed and procedures set in place to improve budget reporting. Standardization and technical support for budgets significantly increased the accountability for the funds, and provide standardized information. For the 123 grants recipients submitting evaluation reports, the NCDPI indicates that a total of \$15,360,000 in grant funding was distributed.

## **Conclusions**

The 2008 dropout prevention grants are serving more than 70,000 students in 76 counties with prevention services. A total of 16,425 students were targeted for documented risk factors that the services are designed to diminish or eliminate. Together, these two kinds of services should decrease the dropout rate and increase the four-year cohort graduation rate.

The framework now exists for documenting fidelity of program implementation, whether targeted students successfully meet program benchmarks, and how many students benefit from preventative components of these programs. The move toward using academic and behavior data to target students for intervention services may in and of itself contribute to reducing the dropout rate. We have also found that aligning services to needs using academic and behavior data can have immediate positive effects.

As the practice of using academic data to target students for academic interventions becomes more routine, and access to the most challenging courses opens up to students who are predicted to succeed, students who have been traditionally referred to as “at-risk” may begin connecting with school and developing an increased sense of self-worth. The academic opportunities that we give students are the greatest indicators of what we think they are worth and what we convey to the students.

## Recommendations

**1. All programs funded by the NC Committee on Dropout Prevention should continue to use data to identify students who will receive targeted interventions.**

Although the NCCDP has done much to ensure agencies articulate SMART outcomes for their programs, problems continue to arise in this area. These problems are sometimes based on a lack of understanding of educational standard measures, such as End-of-Grade (EOG) scoring or grade level requirements for Advanced Placement (AP) courses. More predominant – and more serious – however, is the lack of the 21st century Data Pillar that must be in place to identify the correct students for programs and provide meaningful measures of success. Data must be consulted to ensure individual students meet criteria for SMART outcomes.

**2. Whenever possible, programs funded by the NC Committee on Dropout Prevention should use EVAAS data to help identify students and assess progress.**

Although some evidence exists for identifying who drops out, it is not clear that all targeted groups are at risk of dropping out. EVAAS (Education Value-Added Assessment System) can predict which students are not likely to be successful in core courses without additional help. The NCDPI is partnering with SAS to develop Graduation Resiliency, a software program designed to facilitate the early identification via an examination of research-based risk factors of students who may be at risk of dropping out of school. We could gain valuable information by identifying programs that were successful with students identified by EVAAS as needing academic help to succeed, or by the Graduation Resiliency software as being at risk of dropping out.

This information can be known and would potentially impact the effectiveness of dropout prevention funds. Such information would allow district personnel to apply for funding for specific dropout factors common within their district. However, school

districts are not likely to keep records required for determining the effectiveness of interventions with these students unless they are assisted in doing so.

**3. The NC Committee on Dropout Prevention should continue to pursue funding for a commissioned study to identify programs and practices that “beat the odds” in encouraging school completion.** The Quality Standards and Assessments pillar of education initiatives include quality academic standards to ensure students are prepared for graduation and entrance into society as adults in a 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace. North Carolina currently has in place quality academic standards in its Standard Course of Study (NC SCOS). Meeting these academic standards are requirements currently necessary for students to graduate. It is fitting then, for most programs to help students reach the benchmarks as defined in NC SCOS. If a study is conducted to determine what services help students who are predicted by EVAAS or by the Graduation Resiliency software to fail to meet these standards, valuable information could be gained. The NCCDP could use the information to provide clearer guidelines about what applications they would fund based on evidence of effectiveness for the students we can identify as needing help. The grant application process would be simpler, yet more effective, and might increase the level of innovation among the existing and partnering leadership that support the grant award process. Once finished, the study could be made an integral part of determining which areas to address toward dropout prevention. Funding for such a study is not forthcoming at this time, however.

Meanwhile, granted agencies should be required to strive to achieve academic benchmarks. With guidance and appropriate data, most agencies could design programs to specifically address these areas. Assistance with data retrieval, interpretation, and setting reasonable benchmarks would improve the integrity of the grants.

**4. The NCCDP, EDSTAR, and NCDPI determine criteria for establishing internal and external validity of promising programs that are considered for**

**replicating, and establish a framework for disseminating information about the programs that will be shared as model programs.** Promising programs have been identified, but should be further reviewed for clear descriptions of interventions and fidelity of implementation. Benchmarks should be assessed according to a concrete rubric of quality standards and assessments relating to graduating from high school.

Program documentation has been designed primarily for accountability purposes, and may not be the way to communicate what is needed for replication. Best ways to disseminate information for programs to serve as models should be reviewed.

# 2008 Dropout Prevention Grant Recipients Program Evaluation

## Final Report

### Description

In 2008, the General Assembly of North Carolina approved additional funding for dropout prevention grants, continuing Session Law 2007-323, which established the North Carolina Committee on Dropout Prevention. The \$7 million funding in 2007 was increased to \$15 million, and allocated to 123 agencies, including 39 of the original 2007 grantees. These funds were used to extend 2007 grant programs or to begin new dropout prevention programs for the 2008-2009 school year.

North Carolina's steadily increasing dropout rate finally began to decline as programs were implemented through the grant. The dropout rate fell from 5.24% in 2006-2007 to 4.97% in 2007-2008. More than half of North Carolina's Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) (57%) reported decreases, and every high school grade (9-12) was able to report a reduction in the number of dropouts. With the exception of multiracial students, all races and ethnic groups saw declines in the numbers and percentages of dropouts (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2008). In the 2008-2009 school year, the dropout rate fell again from 4.97% to 4.27%--the lowest dropout rate ever recorded in North Carolina. A decrease in the dropout rate was reported in 84% of all school districts. North Carolina schools also saw a decrease in acts of crime and violence, and both short-term and long-term suspensions. The decrease in long-term suspensions was dramatic—from 5,225 incidents to 3,592—down 31.3% (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2010). (For specific details on the dropout incidents, see <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/research/discipline/reports/consolidated/2008-09/consolidated-report.pdf>.) Although one cannot necessarily attribute a causal relationship between the funding of these initial dropout prevention grants and the

reduction in dropout numbers, nevertheless, the S. L. 2007-323, the subsequent S.L. 2008-0107, the NCCDP, and the NCDPI have increased awareness and understanding of dropout prevention in North Carolina. Additionally, the programs implemented very likely had some impact on the decline in dropout numbers. Many programs included services designed to improve behavior and reduce suspension, both of which may be attributable to the decline in those numbers as well. Also, the majority of programs devised to improve academic achievement may have indirectly affected student behavior, thus contributing to the declines in crime and suspensions, as well as the dropout incidents.

### **Dropout prevention leadership and collaboration**

The collaboration and successful implementation of funding for the dropout prevention grants involves the well coordinated efforts of the North Carolina General Assembly, members of the NCCDP, members of the Joint Legislative Commission on Dropout Prevention and High School Graduation, and the NCDPI. The General Assembly allocates funding and specifies the priorities to be addressed in awarding grant funds. The members of the NCCDP are appointed and serve the General Assembly's interests in making sure dropout funds and the process of awarding grants have appropriate oversight and leadership, adhere to the legislation, and receive a thorough evaluation to determine effectiveness. The Joint Legislative Commission on Dropout Prevention and High School Graduation reviews the grant evaluation and decides whether expanding or replicating dropout prevention funds will improve graduation rates. Additionally, the Commission examines research on student success, school reform efforts, and the suitability of required courses for graduation. The Commission also determines strategies best suited to help students remain in school when they are at risk of dropping out.

The NCDPI is the fiscal agent of the dropout prevention funds. The NCDPI also provides tremendous leadership to funded programs and hosts the necessary technical

training and centralized communication that are essential to documenting the work being done with dropout prevention funds.

The partnership of these entities is both innovative and effective. It is a unique collaboration of governing elected officials, state-wide community members and advocates, and the state department providing leadership for educational and public school initiatives throughout North Carolina. Responsibilities among the respective partnering entities are clear, and positive and consistent communication about dropout prevention efforts are addressed with grant funds.

Grantees for General Assembly of North Carolina's dropout prevention grant included LEAs, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), including non-profit and faith-based agencies; and universities or government agencies. Some grantees used their funding to enhance existing programs; others began new programs. Many grant-funded projects were part of a larger initiative paid for with a variety of resources. School systems, community volunteers, and other agencies provided resources to support programs. These resources ranged from full-time teachers and social workers to one-time guest speakers.

### **Understanding outcomes in broader perspective reform initiatives**

Dropout prevention outcomes can best be understood as they relate to the broader perspective of education initiatives in general. When educational systems endeavor to retain students in school so that they will graduate and become productive citizens, many milestones must be met toward that end. Dropout prevention can be understood in terms of the framework provided by the Race to the Top initiative. This will facilitate understanding how all these initiatives relate. Any achievement toward one end dovetails and plays an integral role in the other.

The four pillars of Race to the Top are:

- Great Teachers and Principals

- Quality Standards and Assessments
- Turnaround of Lowest-Achieving Schools
- Data System to Improve Instruction

### **Great teachers and principals**

Most of the program staff for the dropout grant programs were teachers. Research shows that using regular teachers from students' schools in curricular programs outside of school times is one of the most efficient strategies to improve academics (Fashola, 1998). Evidence of leadership was included in the screening process for awarding grants. Grantors sought program directors who were on board and enthusiastic about the programs to be implemented. Even the volunteers and staff from outside the school system were generally selected for their passion and eagerness to help the students succeed. Among the successful programs, the hard work and enthusiasm of the staff members was conspicuous in every aspect of the programs — from planning, to implementation. These were the staff members who, when contacted, were anxious to discuss their programs — particularly the students they were helping. Staff members who were genuinely concerned with the welfare and achievement of the students had the most successful programs.

### **Quality standards and assessments**

Quality standards and assessments refer to the learning standards and assessments that tell us if students have met them. North Carolina criteria for graduating include the learning objectives outlined in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NC SCOS). The ultimate goals of the dropout prevention grants must be that students meet these standards and graduate. Many grant agencies set goals related to helping students meet the learning standards required for graduation, but other areas were also prevalent as objects of change. Some behavioral characteristics, such as suspensions and attendance, may be indirectly or directly related to meeting the

standards for graduation. Indirectly, they can cause students to fail to meet academic standards. In some districts, even when students meet academic standards, they can fail because of policies regarding attendance. Other behavioral issues are less clearly related to meeting standards for graduation. For example, self-esteem, goal setting, and feeling connected to school are less clearly related to meeting graduation requirement standards.

### **Turnaround of lowest-achieving schools**

The turnaround of lowest-achieving schools, the third pillar in the Race to the Top program, is inherent in the dropout prevention grant. The schools with high dropout rates, and which were able to present a viable, quality, research-based program, were awarded funds to turn their schools around.

### **Data system to improve instruction**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century data system, referred to in the four pillars that support education initiatives, is in direct opposition to the at-risk model often prevalent in programs designed to improve performance. This *Data Pillar* is comprised of four components:

- Determine what the data indicate are the greatest problems and possible solutions.
- Decide how to use data to align services for individuals.
- Create an Information Management System that will document what services were provided, and provide accountability for program implementation.
- Decide how to measure student success against quality standards and assessments.

The 2008 grants had already been awarded when EDSTAR was hired to be the evaluator, but most grantees had not yet begun providing services. Some agencies had not articulated which students they were serving in terms of individuals with

characteristics that could be changed. EDSTAR provided technical assistance to help the grantees write SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) outcomes and target individuals. Grantees did not change the services they were providing, but articulated more specifically which students to target for those services, and how they would measure success. For example, they may have originally written that they would help at-risk students pass Algebra I with a goal of lowering the dropout rate of at-risk youth. This may have been changed to say that they would target 9<sup>th</sup> graders who had scored below grade level on the 8<sup>th</sup> grade math EOG, with the goal that they would pass Algebra I. They described how they intended to change the students, how the changes would be measured, and in what timeframe. A few agencies had planned to raise self-esteem, or increase students' ability to create goals. They rewrote these goals in terms of SMART outcomes, and success was measured against whether they met them, even though these goals do not directly relate to meeting quality standards for graduation.

Program staff decided what data they would use to target students and measure successes. EDSTAR provided technical assistance to agencies to help them understand how to use data to determine whom to target.

EDSTAR created information management systems to help the grantees keep uniform, relevant records. This included a budget form, attendance and student information rosters, forms for documenting program implementation activities, forms for describing staffing information, and interim and final reporting forms. EDSTAR provided technical support for using this information management system, and collected periodic data to ensure that grantees were collecting this information.

From the information provided by grantees, EDSTAR was able to determine whether grantees met the benchmarks set as their SMART outcomes, and how many individuals met the benchmarks set for them. EDSTAR was able to identify successful programs that can serve as promising programs. The clarity provided by having the

proper information, well-articulated goals, and final reports allows us to identify areas of weakness that can be improved in the future.

Although the agencies provided valuable services which undoubtedly helped students improve and may have directly contributed to North Carolina's overall reduction in dropouts, some of the agencies neglected some aspect of the Data Pillar, which made documentation or quantitative measures of success difficult to assess. Students were sometimes targeted based on what staff believed were proxies for achievement or other data. Some programs treated students of a particular ethnic or demographic group as having a factor that might make them at risk for dropping out, but did not examine baseline data to determine if individual students actually needed interventions provided. These programs, although providing services to the students in need, may have also treated students who met benchmarks before the services were provided.

Another problem arose when grantees did not understand what would be reasonable growth targets. For example, one grant recipient wanted students to improve three points on their EOG tests – not a significant improvement, while another program expected students to improve by 25 points – several year's growth. One commercial program (Advancement Via Individual Determination, or AVID) targets average students in grades 4 through 12 and has an objective that all students will enroll in an AP class. This particular AVID program was serving middle and junior high students in a district in which AP classes are not available until the sophomore year, thus making accurate measurements of the effectiveness of the program problematic. Sometimes, agencies indicated outputs rather than outcomes, e.g., they would count their program as a success if a certain percentage of students attended after-school math tutoring sessions. Although tutoring sessions are important, the desired outcome should be that a certain percentage of students will succeed on standardized math tests.

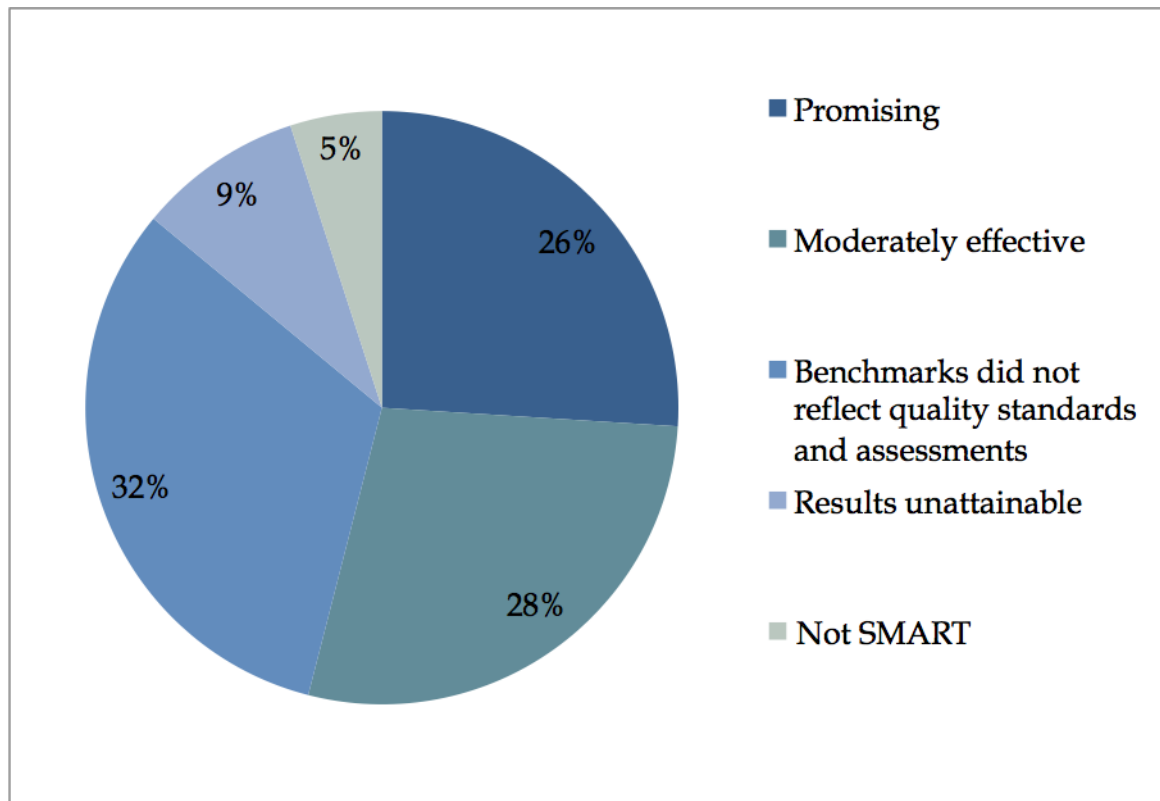
All of these programs provided services which were helpful to the students and may have ultimately contributed to their achievement, but because of the misunderstandings, they fall short of the standards of the dropout prevention program's aim not only to reduce the numbers of dropouts, but to identify effective services so that successful programs can be replicated.

Despite these shortcomings, overall 26% of the programs met every aspect of the four pillars provided in Race to the Top, as well as adhering to the principles laid out in the government's Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART). This system assigns scores to programs based on services being related to goals, showing that the goals are appropriate for the individuals served, and student success measured against quality standards and assessments. PART rates programs that cannot demonstrate whether they have been effective or not because of lack of data or clear performance goals with the rating "Results Not Demonstrated." Currently, nearly half (47%) of U.S. Department of Education grant programs rated by the government are given this rating, thus illustrating the difficulties of making this transition to outcome based accountability.

In summary, 26% of the dropout prevention programs were effective, met their benchmarks, and met all criteria that the PART rating system uses. These have been identified as promising programs to share with other LEAs for consideration. An additional 28% of the programs did not meet the benchmarks they set in their SMART outcome, yet they served significant numbers of students with valuable services, and many achieved the goals set. These programs could be termed "moderately effective." They used data properly, there were reasonable connections between data used to target students and to measure success, and much progress was made. Thirty two percent of the programs met their objectives, but did not have clear connections between data used to target students and to measure success, benchmarks were not significant, or there was no clear connection between the outcome and achieving

standards for graduation. Of these 32%, 14% met their benchmarks and 18% did not. Nine percent of programs either discovered that students had already exceeded the benchmarks prior to service, or set unattainable benchmarks. The remaining 5% did not have SMART outcomes.

**Figure 1. Classification of 2008 Grant Outcomes**



### **Programs which used appropriate data**

One common component of promising programs was the use of appropriate data to identify students to target for the services to meet the objectives of SMART outcomes, and to determine the effectiveness of programs. Examples abound of agencies with objectives to improve academic achievement that used appropriate academic data to determine which students could benefit from tutoring or extra assistance in a particular subject. Likewise, if the objective was to decrease absenteeism or suspensions, these data were obtained. NC WISE and EOG data were often the sources of data. A few

grantees used EVAAS (Education Value-Added Assessment System) as a data source. Demographic information was rarely a factor; promising programs used appropriate data, and then administered services which research had shown to be effective toward the objectives they hoped to achieve.

Although many more programs had success meeting the benchmarks they had set, we selected the most promising programs that made good use of data, provided relevant services, and saw significant numbers of students successfully meet benchmarks related to achieving quality standards for graduation. Complete descriptions of these programs are available and can be used for considering replication.

We identified 28 promising programs that served significant numbers of students, measured quantitative changes, and addressed factors that could reasonably be related to success at school. (See Appendix for descriptions.) From these promising programs, we have identified six that have been funded for a fourth year and may be developed into models to share with other agencies and LEAs. Two of these programs will require additional technical assistance for documenting program components well enough to serve as models, while four may be proven programs to consider for replication. An additional six programs funded for a third year have been identified as promising and will be reviewed further to determine whether they are appropriate to consider for replication, and what additional technical assistance is required.

Both promising and flawed programs illustrate the importance of data-driven selection and services, as well as the importance of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Data Pillar in lieu of the at-risk model it must replace. The dropout prevention program has provided us with ample information to diagnose what should be done differently, and to emphasize the importance of this Data Pillar as a key component of successful programs.

The clarity in the administration of the dropout prevention program has allowed us to address shortcomings. From the first year of the dropout prevention grant to the present, we have learned much to improve the grants. In the first year of the grant, when EDSTAR entered at its conclusion, many agencies were conducting laudable services, but because they were not heeding the four pillars – specifically the Data Pillar – programs were difficult to assess. Many of the programs (73%) lacked baseline data to measure outcomes. Although this situation improved for the 2008 grants with the advent of required SMART outcomes, some agencies continued to treat students based on their membership in a subgroup rather than their performance. Additionally, many programs included components designed to address areas not directly related to academic achievement, which is ultimately the prerequisite for graduation.

In the course of our work with the dropout prevention grant, we have also discovered what works well. Success in school is achieved through programs that rely on outcome-based, data-driven systems to achieve their goals. It is clear that the four pillars of Race to the Top are relevant in any educational program that strives to help students achieve.

## **Grantees**

Of the 123 agencies awarded the 2008 grants, 42 are LEAs, 17 are schools (including 3 colleges), 47 are non-profits, 4 are faith-based, and the other 13 include government agencies such as social services and a local police department, as well as YMCAs and other institutions. Most grantees worked in collaboration with other agencies to provide a wider variety of services than grantees could provide alone. They solicited familiar institutions as partners such as 4H, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, YMCAs, YWCAs, and scout troops, as well as local churches and other organizations. Additionally, local agencies such as police departments were solicited for single lectures, and grantees that included career information often enlisted the services of local businesses for lectures, job shadowing, and internships.

## Goals and objectives

In early 2009, EDSTAR was contracted to provide general support to the NCCDP, as well as many specific resources and services for grantees. This collaboration between EDSTAR and NCDPI came on the cusp as the 2007 grant programs had concluded and the funds had been recently distributed for the 2008 grants. EDSTAR was asked to provide an evaluation that would identify effective practices that could serve as promising programs to be replicated.

As evaluators, we knew we would not be able to document program effectiveness or provide information to be used for replicating promising programs if any components of the Data Pillar were missing. We have worked to eliminate incongruities through mandatory staff development, support, and data-management resources. As previously discussed, EDSTAR created the Information Management system necessary for implementing the 21<sup>st</sup> century Data Pillar, and helped the 2008 grant recipients write SMART outcomes that described which group of students they were targeting, how they intended to change the students, how the changes would be measured, and in what timeframe.

Because many programs were underway when the evaluators came aboard for the 2008 grants, SMART outcomes had to be articulated for many previously designed goals. Sometimes retro-fitting a SMART outcome for a program already in progress revealed shortcomings in the programs which could be corrected. In many cases, these problems were rectified, and grantees adjusted their programs to ensure the purpose was clear, the appropriate students were being served, and the objectives were reasonable and measurable. Although EDSTAR provided assistance in articulating the SMART outcomes, applicants were responsible for identifying the appropriate students to target for services. As previously noted, some agencies carried out programs in which results could not be demonstrated for a variety of reasons.

## **Accountability**

Despite the minor setbacks depicted previously, 118 of the 123 grantees (95%) provided SMART Outcomes, nearly all of which were suitable. This represents a significant improvement from 2007, when only 27% of agencies used pre- and post-data for individuals served to measure progress for desired outcomes. When compared to the Department of Education, with 47% of grants not able to be rated, the figure of 95% becomes relatively more impressive. For the purposes of this report, all discussions of outcomes include only those that can be properly assessed.

EDSTAR, the NCCDP, and NCDPI have worked together to support the grantees as they move toward this higher level of accountability, and building the Data Pillar. The NCCDP now requires grants be written with SMART outcomes and logic models. The NCDPI provides technical assistance during the application process. For grantees, EDSTAR has created the information management systems that support this accountability. EDSTAR also provides a tremendous amount of technical support throughout the year to help grantees make the shift to outcome based accountability. The fact that 95% of the 2008 grantees had outcome-based programs that could be evaluated for effectiveness speaks to the collaborative efforts of the NCDPI, the NCCDP, and EDSTAR working to support the grantees to make this transition.

NCDPI worked closely with EDSTAR to ensure agencies provided data when requested, and that the intent of the program was being followed, i.e., reducing the dropout rate in North Carolina. Very few of the agencies had problems, but those that did provided us with information about how to better serve well-meaning grantees who lacked some capacity. These efforts have done much to improve accountability. Problems are usually recognized immediately, and EDSTAR alerts NCDPI when program implementation does not seem consistent with a grantee's plans. Several times, site monitoring visits were made when NCDPI deemed it appropriate due to problems that arose in particular programs. Timelines for fixing problems were assigned and met

in most cases. NCDPI's diligence was instrumental in ensuring compliance with program standards. Because of their attentiveness, nearly all (95%) grant recipient agencies kept good records and complied with the intent of the grant. In one case, when concerns arose, an agency was required to return its funding and terminate its program. This close monitoring by NCDPI ensured the integrity of the program was maintained.

### **How agencies acquired data**

Grantees acquired data from a variety of sources. Most data sources were appropriate for students targeted and for outcomes staff hoped to achieve. NC WISE and standardized tests were common sources of data to determine students to target for academic and disciplinary factors. Some agencies used EVAAS. For SMART outcomes which sought to make subjective changes — such as student attitudes or self-esteem — most grantees used pre- and post-surveys to determine improvement.

Few of the LEAs reported encountering obstacles to obtaining data. Those who did encounter obstacles often reported that the difficulties stemmed from a transition from one data system to another taking place, such as SIMS to NC WISE. NC WISE was new to some grantees, and they explained that they were just learning to use it properly. Some LEAs that relied on teachers to provide data also indicated that information was slow in coming.

Some non-profits and other agencies reported difficulties in obtaining data. Most of these agencies served students who attended local schools. Because their agencies were not part of the school, staff were required to obtain parent permission, or have the parents retrieve the information and pass it to them. This was particularly cumbersome to the grantees, who had to instruct parents on retrieving data. These scenarios required parents and school personnel who were both willing to cooperate, and able to find a common time. One agency explained that obtaining permission from parents was especially difficult, because some the parents were illiterate and could not fill out forms to provide permission for them to obtain their children's data.

Many outside agencies had to count on school staff to retrieve the data, and sometimes to interpret it. For example, Together Transforming Lives indicated that school staff provided important insight on how to read the standard test summaries, grade ranges of each scoring level of the EOG/End-of-Course (EOC), and whether or not students were retested. A judge explained to them how students were classified as juvenile delinquents.

Most grantees expounded on how cooperative personnel who provided data were. A few, however, indicated that finding personnel in the schools willing to provide the data was difficult. Time was usually the crippling factor. School personnel's schedules were too busy to accommodate them, and finding a time to obtain and relay the data was taxing to school staff.

One grant recipient, The Children's Council of Watauga County, which serves teen parents and pregnant teens, sought students who had already left school because of pregnancies and parenthood to entice them to return to school and complete their education. The school system they served had no coordinated system to learn why students dropped out, so they were not able to easily make referrals to the program. Program staff were able to find and recruit many of the girls without the school system being able to refer them, although it was much more difficult. They now have a viable dropout prevention program which appears to be promising. The school system has since instigated an exit interview that will make future endeavors much simpler.

Overall, most grantees reported no problems obtaining or interpreting data. Only 20 of the 123 agencies reported any problems, and most of these were overcome. The transition to NC WISE was the most commonly reported obstacle, not only because of the learning curve involved, but because some data were not previously recorded in the old system. For example, at some schools, tardy students may have been reported as absent. Non-LEAs reported that having to go through schools or through parents for

achievement or other data sources was difficult, but in no case was the problem insurmountable.

## **Program descriptions**

Accountability and transparency have been greatly increased by organizing each grantee's information and posting it to EDSTAR's website. Each agency's staff has filled out a form depicting their program. These forms briefly describe each program, list SMART outcomes, describe what data were used and how they were obtained (including obstacles encountered), and any highlights of the programs.

In the individual forms available on EDSTAR's website, the description is followed by a list of activities they have incorporated into their program. Then, each of their SMART outcomes is listed, with a short narrative telling what data they are using, how they obtained it, what obstacles (if any) they encountered obtaining the data, and services they provided to achieve this outcome. With each SMART outcome that provided targeted services, agencies reported the number of students served and the number of students who met the benchmark outlined in the SMART outcome. They also describe staffing, budget, how families were involved, and prevention services provided.

Most of the grantees included highlights with their reports. These are some component or effect of their program they were particularly proud of. Highlights include individual student milestones, such as "Dianna," a sixth grade student in the dropout program of Communities in Schools of Brunswick County. "Dianna" had been before Peer Court and was assigned to community service. She actually enjoyed working in a thrift shop, and came back to school with a renewed attitude toward her schoolwork and the other students. Her grades improved, and all of her teachers reported vast improvements in her attitude.

Other highlights affected larger groups of people in positive ways, such as Kannapolis City Schools, who had a dinner for students and their families, in which 128 people attended. Staff members discussed senior projects, curricula, college applications and financial aid. Students performed, and several parents spoke as well. The evening was such a success, parents requested it become an annual event.

At West Rowan High School, program staff were able to bring back 11 students who had already dropped out. These students graduated with their class. Through the use of credit recovery, they have also prevented many other students from dropping out.

Many highlights include stories of parents of the students dropping by the school to profusely thank the staff for the work they have done with their children. Sometimes, the students themselves provide the highlight, describing how some aspect of the dropout prevention program has motivated them to stay in school or abandon some debilitating aspect of their lives.

Because each agency's forms are available to all grantees on EDSTAR's website, staff can collaborate and share information from each other's reports. NCDPI will provide a link so that the reports can be read by the public as well.

## **Staff**

As previously discussed, research shows that using regular teachers from students' schools in curricular programs outside of school times is one of the most efficient strategies to improve academics (Fashola, 1998). Appropriately, most of the permanent staff who worked directly with students were teachers. Community members were the largest component, although some of these were one-time guest speakers. Parent volunteers made up another large component of regular staff members. Students, including participants, peers, and college students, provided the second largest cadre of volunteers (after community members).

Figure 2 shows the type of staff that worked with the dropout prevention grants.

**Figure 2: Types and Numbers of Staff**

Type of Staff	Number Paid With Grant Funds	Number Paid With Other Funds	Volunteers	Number Who Work Directly With Students
Teachers (including retired)	543	493	115	975
College Students	82	30	287	393
High School Students	51	17	351	339
Participants' Parents	9	6	378	358
Youth Development Worker	34	32	103	155
Community Members	101	35	1022	687
Other	161	106	109	270
<b>Total</b>	<b>981</b>	<b>719</b>	<b>2365</b>	<b>3177</b>

### Services provided

**Services provided to staff.** Many of the agencies provided professional staff development. Most professional development was provided to supplement or train staff for the programs implemented for the students, although some took place as a main component of the program itself.

**Services provided to families.** Although all grantees provided services to help students, many services were provided to families. In fact, nearly every participating grant recipient included parents in their program to some degree. Across programs, parents were involved at every turn, from planning programs to actually providing services to the students. Grantees made concerted efforts to communicate with families through progress reports, frequent telephone calls home, e-mail, etc. Orientations were common at the onset of dropout prevention programs, and parents were often encouraged or required to attend.

Some services were provided directly to parents to help them help their children succeed. For example, Hoke County Schools' program staff invited the North Carolina Justice Center for Education & Law Project to address 40 parents on their children's right to a sound, basic education. They also held a workshop for students and their parents, in which they distributed their own handbook on policies for students and parents. Cleveland County Schools' program involved reducing truancy, and parents of truant students were required to attend truancy mediation and truancy court with their children.

Many programs offered workshops for parents to teach them parenting skills conducive to their children's success, or how to help their children choose and apply to colleges. Some grantees offered transportation, childcare, and incentives such as dinner or door prizes at their events. Some encouraged parents to attend field trips and orientations with their children. Others made some parent activities mandatory. Some parents participated in fund-raising events. Other events involving parents included celebrations, or family nights, in which students performed or were recognized for success and parents were invited to join in the celebrations.

**Services provided to students.** Grantees were given autonomy to provide services they believed would best suit their students. Many programs provided multiple services while some concentrated on academic support or career resources required to graduate.

Programs could be classified into three primary types: targeted to specific students or groups, school-wide, and larger than school-wide, although some grants supported both a targeted component and a larger component. The school-wide and larger categories are considered "non-targeted" services and, although beneficial, can be more difficult to gauge directly, as many students may reap benefits that are not measured.

**Targeted services.** Because of the SMART outcomes, it is easy to discern which students are targeted, what is expected to change, and how it will be measured. Targeted services are components of programs designed for students with specific factors that presumably may make them more apt than students without those factors to drop out.

Activities addressed specific risk factors. Nearly half the agencies addressed SMART outcomes dealing with general academics and attendance. Actual services provided to students varied, although some were more common than others. Academic skill help and the integration of social and behavioral skills (e.g., leadership, self-confidence, etc.) were the two most common services provided, with 63% of the grantees offering these.

Academic skill help was usually in the form of tutoring, which may have been in small groups or one-on-one. Tutoring was performed by teachers from the schools, volunteers from other agencies such as universities or local businesses, or from other students. More than a quarter of the agencies (28%) allowed more senior students to serve as peer tutors, usually after passing through a short training session or academy.

Many activities were done to integrate social and behavioral skills. Mentors were used in more than a quarter of the programs. These adult advocates were carefully chosen for the guidance they could provide students. Other examples of integrating social and behavioral skills involved instruction in making good choices and being responsible for one's behavior. Anti-bullying, drug abuse, pregnancy prevention, and making sound choices were many of the topics addressed.

Some grantees helped students look to the future with graduation plans, college, vocational, and career opportunities. Local businesses provided interesting lectures on job possibilities, and some even provided internships for high school students. Parents were sometimes involved in career and vocational information seminars. Field trips to college campuses and businesses were common activities to promote these outcomes.

Although most of the services provided to the students were sound, many were designed to change factors that support academic success. Absenteeism, suspensions, and other behavior factors undoubtedly contribute to declining graduation rates, but ultimately, only academic achievement will put students across the finish line.

The following figure shows the activities provided and the percentages of grantees that provided each activity.

**Figure 3: Services Provided**

<b>Services</b>	<b>Percentage of grantees offering (N = 123)</b>
Academic skill help	87%
Personal skills (e.g. leadership, self-confidence, etc.)	85%
Adult mentoring	59%
Recreational activities	52%
Transition to high school programs	46%
Peer tutoring	42%
Counseling groups	40%
Other	36%
Credit recovery	36%
Service learning	35%
Primary adult advocate	32%
School-wide reform (e.g., professional development)	29%
Peer-based mentoring	29%

Services	Percentage of grantees offering (N = 123)
Customized graduation plans	27%
Preparation for vocational or applied skills certificate programs	19%
On and off campus employment opportunities	10%

*Note: Figures may add to more than 100% because agencies offer more than one service each.*

Coordination of existing services from multiple agencies such as health, mental health, social work, parent education, and after-school programming was an important component of several research-based programs. These programs tended to target students with more severe needs such as truancy, chronic absenteeism, and court involvement. The programs provided rapid intervention and wrap-around services, often on the school site, with the goal of keeping students in school.

Other types of services provided included summer camps (with academic instruction as well as outdoor sports and educational activities), summer classroom settings with academic instruction and orientation, service learning projects, pregnancy prevention, job placement and career days, field trips (to educational settings such as museums, to college and high school campuses, and to recreational settings), and lessons on attitudes and making good choices. Services took place during and after school, on weekends, and in the summer.

Figure 4 shows risk factors for which grant recipients provided specific services. These were calculated from the SMART outcomes. The category “Other” includes good SMART outcomes that did not fit these categories. The category NOT SMART refers to outcomes that were not measurable or did not relate to how students would change. These were outcomes such as those discussed previously, which quantified how often a service would take place or some other output or activity related to, but not defined as, a SMART outcome. EDSTAR provided technical support to help the grantees write

SMART outcomes, and 95% of them were able to articulate their program goals and target groups in terms of SMART outcomes. Agencies wrote up to three SMART outcomes. Nearly half the agencies addressed SMART Outcomes dealing with general academics and attendance.

**Figure 4: Percent of Grantees With These Categories of SMART Outcomes  
(Each grantee submitted up to three.)**

Category	Percentage of grantees addressing (N = 123)
General Academic Support	47%
Attendance	44%
Math	37%
Reading	29%
Suspensions	28%
Connections/Personal Social	16%
Credit Recovery	15%
Other SMART Outcomes	6%
NOT SMART	5%

*Note: Figures may add to more than 100% because many agencies had more than one SMART outcome.*

**Non-targeted services.** All grantees were asked to describe any non-targeted services they provided, and how many students benefitted from them. Sixty-three percent provided non-targeted services. Often, grantees had no way of gauging participation, and determining how many students benefitted was conjecture. For example, Communities in Schools of Brunswick County estimated that 600 students

partook in their Red Ribbon Week; Drug Resistance and Awareness event. They indicated that all students benefitted – and they likely did, but this was an assumption and not based on post-attitude surveys or long-term follow-up studies – nor would one expect it to be.

Kannapolis City Schools installed NovaNET on their computers, which allows students to recover credits needed toward graduation. Although credit recovery is part of their program for their targeted students, the service is available to any students who want to use it. Staff estimated that approximately 49 students had taken advantage of NovaNET. Nearly a quarter (23%) of grantees have reported using credit recovery programs for their targeted students, but most of these programs are available and used by other students as well.

Johnston County Schools instituted a “Caught Doing Good” reward program, which has since spread to include all students and created a positive atmosphere school-wide.

Scotland County Schools saw 100 fewer suspensions than their previous year, which they attribute to their Positive Behavior Support program, a component of their ninth grade academy.

Ninth grade academies, orientations, and other transition services were some of the non-targeted services provided. The transition from middle to high school is commonly fraught with anxiety, and students are most likely to be suspended or leave school altogether during this time (Hertzog & Morgan, 1998; Newman, Lohman, Newman, Myers, & Smith, 2000). Schools that address this time of upheaval do much to quell the anxiety of the students as they make the transition, but, like other non-targeted programs, measuring success directly can be difficult.

Some activities affected not only the students, but other community members as well. Many students helped people who are less fortunate through community service programs, usually helping out in thrift shops or food banks. Students benefitted from these programs, as did the community at large.

Across all the grantees, approximately 70,000 students benefitted from non-targeted services. The non-targeted services, such as those described here, are more likely to affect the four-year cohort graduation rate than are the targeted services. The four-year cohort graduation rate reflects the students who graduate “on time” with the cohort in which they entered 9<sup>th</sup> grade. These preventative services are designed to keep students on track to graduate on time. Targeted services are often for students who are already off track and have a specific factor that is more prevalent in dropouts than in the general population of students. If they get back on track and finish, they may not graduate “on time,” yet they may graduate instead of dropping out. We would expect success with targeted students to improve dropout rates, even if they do not improve four-year cohort graduation rates.

## **Effective services**

### **Research**

Education, now in a transition stage, is moving toward data-driven interventions and providing services based on what data tell us are the needs of individuals. Fewer programs are being designed to serve students based on demographic characteristics with accountability consisting of documenting how many students were served who met demographic criteria, such as low-income or minority status. The field of education is beginning to move toward designing programs with measurable academic or behavioral outcomes, such as helping failing students become academically successful. Accountability is changing to document whether students served ultimately meet benchmarks based on a change in the students.

Among the programs that the What Works Clearinghouse has reviewed as having positive or potentially positive effects for reducing the dropout rate are those that monitor students closely, increase partnerships with families, establish career-focused academies in schools, and offer additional support for academic and behavioral success and college entry (Haslam, Salvatore, Kessler, & Reicher, 2008). More recently,

for diagnostics dropout prevention, What Works Clearinghouse recommended using data systems that support a realistic diagnosis of the number of students who drop out and that help identify individual students at high risk of dropping out. For targeted interventions, they recommend assigning adult advocates to students at risk of dropping out, providing academic support and enrichment, and implementing programs to improve students' classroom behavior and social skills. For non-targeted programs, they recommend providing rigorous and relevant instruction (Dynarski et al., 2008).

### **Effective results of dropout prevention grants 2008**

Nearly half (43%) of 2008 dropout prevention grant agencies met or exceeded the benchmarks they set in their SMART outcomes, and 28 agencies met every aspect of the Data Pillar. These agencies wrote excellent SMART outcomes, consulted appropriate data to ensure the correct students were targeted, provided research-based services designed to effect the desired change in the students, met their benchmarks, and carefully documented every aspect of their programs. Although this indicates a significant number did not, this by no means suggests that other programs were failures. Many agencies, although falling short of their benchmarks, nonetheless provided valuable services to students that may have contributed to shoring them up for academic success. It is important to note that, although assistance was provided to help agencies form coherent SMART outcomes, grantees decided how they would define success for their programs. One agency may have defined success as 85% of students scoring at grade level on a particular standardized test, while another agency may have defined success with a much smaller percentage. Two different schools might reasonably consider these different milestones as successful. If, for example, one school had a high percentage of students performing below grade level while the other had very few students below grade level. Also, by writing their SMART outcomes in terms of percentages, many of the larger programs may have reached a greater number of students, although their percentages may have been smaller. Some students made

progress, but may not have achieved the benchmarks set. In all, 5,584 students – slightly more than a third of students (34.4%) – met the benchmarks set for them. Among the most prevalent benchmarks met were:

- Recovered credits
- Passed required courses previously failed
- Fewer suspensions
- Better attendance
- More self-esteem

A common component of promising programs was the use of appropriate data to identify students to target for the services to meet the objectives of SMART outcomes, and to determine the effectiveness of programs. The significant improvements from the 2007 to the 2008 programs might be traced to the use of SMART outcomes and data as core features of many programs. The Data Pillar has proven to be such an integral part of identifying promising programs, the Dropout Committee has ensured more prevalence of this component by requiring agencies to include SMART outcomes and logic models in their 2009 proposals, which must also describe the targeted students in terms of data.

More can be done to align dropout prevention with the four pillars that support education reform initiatives, and to ensure quality academic standards are the desired outcomes for each agency. We know that academic achievement, and things that support this are the key to graduation. Dropout prevention grantees are making the shift from the at-risk model to the 21<sup>st</sup> century programs supported by the four pillars described in Race to the Top. The shift is not complete, however. Many agencies do not

have the expertise or experience with data to determine what the greatest needs of their target populations are, or to set reasonable outcome benchmarks.

## Students served

Of the 16,425 targeted students served, 51% were male and 49% were female. In 2008-2009, 59% of North Carolina dropouts were male. Figure 5 shows the races of the targeted students served, as compared with North Carolina 2008-2009 dropouts.

**Figure 5: Unduplicated Count of Targeted Students**

Race	American Indian		Asian		Black		Hispanic		Multi racial		White	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
<b>Grade</b>												
<b>K-5</b>	110	148	0	0	466	439	84	80	9	12	179	133
<b>6-8</b>	96	126	17	18	1323	1105	375	369	87	71	934	837
<b>9-12</b>	61	39	82	29	2171	2326	361	420	86	106	1921	1805
<b>% of served</b>	4%		1%		48%		10%		2%		35%	
<b>% of NC dropouts</b>	2%		1%		37%		11%		3%		47%	

Black students were served in higher proportions than the distribution of North Carolina dropouts who were Black. Conversely, fewer Whites were served. These numbers should closely mirror the percentages of dropouts. As the trend toward using achievement and behavior data replaces using demographic data, these comparisons should better align.

The majority of students served were in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. This is expected, as the transition to high school is frequently problematic and is where data can clearly identify which students are less likely to graduate. As previously noted, some programs served pre-school children, or served parents or staff as the primary clients. This is consistent with research on the lasting benefits of early childhood education.

## Pregnancy or parenting responsibilities

Many of the grantees included services for teen parents or pregnant teens. At least four agencies designed their programs specifically for teen parents and pregnant girls – providing parenting lessons, health care, counseling, and academic assistance. Many agencies reported that they served pregnant or parenting teens, and that the students stayed in school as a result of the services provided. The majority of the programs (92%) had no students leave school due to pregnancy or parenting responsibilities. A total of 711 pregnant girls and teen parents were served.

**Figure 6: Pregnancy and Parenting Responsibility**

<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Pregnant at Enrollment</b>	<b>Female Teen Parent</b>	<b>Male Teen Parent</b>
<b>6</b>	24	0	0
<b>7</b>	14	7	0
<b>8</b>	15	11	0
<b>9</b>	47	43	10
<b>10</b>	61	75	10
<b>11</b>	66	80	9
<b>12</b>	88	131	20
<b>Total</b>	315	347	49

*Note: These students were also included in Figure 5.*

## When services were provided

Grantees delivered general and targeted services during the school day, after school, and in the summer. Services took place during the school day for the majority of programs (76%). Most of the grantees (60%) also provided summer programs. Many of the grant recipients' summer programs were continuations of the programs that took place during the school year, although several recipients provided different services

altogether. Summer programs were more likely to include field trips, with combinations of educational and entertaining places visited.

## **Commercial components**

Many grant recipients incorporated commercial programs into their curricula — most of them on-line or other computer programs. *Study Island* is an online curriculum program that identifies the student level and builds a study curriculum based upon that level. *Orchard* identifies student levels in Math and Language Arts and challenges the student to increase working towards the next level cognition. *Accelerated Reader* is a program that targets the student reading grade level and supplies a range recommended for improvement. This program also tests students for reading ability and comprehension. *NovaNET*, *ODYSSEYWARE*, *NCVPS* and other programs were used to recover credits.

Several recipients used AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination). This is a grade 4 through 12 system designed to prepare students for four-year college eligibility and success.

AVID has much research to recommend it. But AVID must be implemented with fidelity, and, most importantly, it must serve the students for whom it is intended. AVID requires targeting students who have demonstrated average performance and preparing them in top track classes. In North Carolina, EVAAS reports reveal 56% of students (more than 24,000 students) who could be placed in the top algebra track and succeed with no assistance are not currently in that track (SAS Institute Inc., 2009). AVID is designed not for these students, but rather for students who are average or below average, and might succeed with intervention — thus giving these students priority over students who should already be placed in the top track. What Works Clearinghouse could find only one valid study of AVID, and from this, they concluded that the program had no discernable effects on comprehension for the students in the study (What Works Clearinghouse, 2010a).

*Check & Connect* was another program used by several agencies. What Works Clearinghouse explains that little research has been done on this program, but two studies indicate that the program may be effective at keeping students in school. The program has two main components. An adult mentor is assigned to students in the program. The adults monitor the students' progress and provide support (check). The adults also help the students "connect" with the community and their families (What Works Clearinghouse, 2006).

The *Plato Learning System* is an online, comprehensive curriculum software program that has content and curricula aligned with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study for all English, mathematics, science, and social studies curricula. What Works Clearinghouse has only examined research on its math proponent. Results indicated that the improvement index was not discernable (What Works Clearinghouse, 2010b).

The *Synergistic Learning System* is a modular system for students, which also incorporates learning stations in the classroom. Each module is an intensive, seven-session exploration of a particular topic. Modules are delivered at self-sufficient workstations that accommodate everything students need to complete their activities. The classroom becomes an applied learning center, a place where students use technology to explore and apply the concepts they learn throughout the day. Math, science, communication, and language arts skills are put to practice as students complete their module activities. (This program has not been examined by What Works Clearinghouse.)

*Read 180* was another program introduced into the dropout prevention programs. This program addresses gaps in students reading abilities. No studies on *Read 180* meet What Works Clearinghouse strict guidelines, but several studies that meet their guidelines, with reservations, indicate that the program may have positive

effects on reader comprehensions and general literacy achievement for adolescent learners (What Works Clearinghouse, 2009).

Other commercially available programs were used in the dropout prevention programs. Although not all programs have been shown to prevent students from dropping out of school, many provide positive reinforcement which may contribute to factors which are more likely to help students improve academically and behaviorally – both factors which the What Works Clearinghouse espouses as important for dropout prevention (Dynarski et al., 2008).

## **Obstacles overcome**

Grantees reported obstacles they encountered while implementing their programs. Most of the problems were those grantees encountered when trying to obtain data, as discussed in the section on how agencies acquired data.

Wilson County Department of Social Services was one of the grantees that used funds to serve pregnant and parenting teen girls. As they reported, “We found it very hard to get students to return phone calls and keep appointments with their case managers. When NCCDP approved for us to purchase our case managers cell phones with unlimited texting capability, we experienced an immediate and effective communication method. This has resulted in on-going communication between student and their case managers. It is also a good tool to use in providing motivational messages which have increased the participation and relationship with their case manager.”

Some grant recipients reported having difficulty finding enough volunteers. The grantees changed their requirements, which broadened the pool of potential tutors or mentors. By allowing encouragement and assistance to take place through emails and phone calls, in addition to in-person contact, more mentors were willing to participate.

Grant recipients who scheduled activities for parents reported better participation when they made it as easy as possible for parents to attend. Different time frames, such as before school or later in the evenings, were more convenient for some parents. Parents also seemed more likely to attend if their children were performing, or if food and door prizes were offered. Some grantees offered transportation and childcare services as well.

## **Reporting**

EDSTAR sought feedback from grantees regarding how to make the reporting process easier for those who are not technologically skilled. From interviews, reviewing tech-support questions, and small focus group discussions, we restructured the record-keeping and reporting process to be more user-friendly to people with little or no technical skills. The reports and final forms from grantees to EDSTAR have been changed to Adobe Acrobat forms, which people reported being much more comfortable with than web-based data collection or spreadsheets. These forms allow them flexibility to complete them over time. Record-keeping tools were modified to better meet grantee needs. A face-to-face technical assistance meeting to walk grantees through the processes required for collecting and reporting data was very helpful.

Keeping records and reporting information are critical to program accountability and documenting effectiveness. EDSTAR has continued to support grantees as they collect information for reporting about program implementation and outcomes. EDSTAR maintains a website with forms to help with record keeping, reporting forms required for program evaluation and grantee reports, and other resources to support grantees in program evaluation (<http://www.edstar.biz/client/dropoutprevention/>).

Most agencies and school systems are not used to documenting accountability grants according to the 21<sup>st</sup> century standards that include maintaining records from which program effectiveness for the participants can be determined. Many have resisted making this change. The leadership of the NCDPI for program accountability

has been critical to help grantees understand the importance of complying. Although record-keeping and reporting has greatly improved, many grantees continued to have difficulty developing processes for this critical part of outcome-based accountability. Difficulties included having no process for transferring information management duties when staff turned over. EDSTAR spent considerable time with technical support to train new staff on reporting requirements and providing grantees with records they had already submitted to us, then lost when staff turned over.

Moving forward, EDSTAR has developed a Capacity Checklist that grantees will use to help them develop processes required for managing the information needed for accountability. After reviewing the results of monitoring visits, and providing ongoing technical support to grantees, EDSTAR determined that many grantees do not know they should have processes in place that would build their capacity to conduct a quality program. The Capacity Checklist includes items from the monitoring visits and processes that should be in place for managing data over the course of a grant. This checklist may help them identify what they need to be doing differently to build their capacity.

## **Resource support**

Many grant-funded projects were part of a larger initiative supported by a variety of resources. School systems, community volunteers, and other agencies provided resources to support these programs. These resources ranged from full-time teachers and social workers to one-time guest speakers. Volunteers served in a variety of functions: as tutors, chaperones, drivers, activity organizers, fund-raisers, and even snack-preparers. Many grant recipients reported using community buildings to hold activities. Some received computers and other equipment from local agencies and businesses. Figure 7 shows the types of resources frequently reported and the percentage of programs reporting these.

**Figure 7: Resources Used in Conjunction with Grant Funds**

Resource	Percentage of programs (N = 123)
Facilities	77%
Equipment	67%
Paid staff from our agency	61%
Short-term volunteers (one-time speakers or guests)	44%
Paid staff from outside agencies	38%
Long-term volunteers (people who came in frequently to tutor or help out in any way)	37%
Funds	34%
Services	24%

*Note: Percentages may add up to more than 100% due to programs reporting two or more of these.*

### **Coordination to enhance effectiveness of existing programs**

In answer to the question “Describe how the program or initiative was coordinated to enhance the effectiveness of existing programs, initiatives, or services in the community,” reports detailed a number of ways of coordinating and a variety of synergistic effects. Some of the common ways that the grant-funded programs reported enhancing the effectiveness of existing programs are shown in Figure 8.

**Figure 8: Coordination to Enhance Effectiveness of Existing Programs, Initiatives, or Community Services**

Activity	Percentage of grantees (N = 123)
Started new programs or added services that supported old programs	46%

Activity	Percentage of grantees (N = 123)
Multi-agency coordination	40%
Provided computer technology or online classes used beyond the scope of the program	37%
Professional development opportunities for staff of existing programs	31%
Trained volunteers	26%
Changed school culture	21%
Increased transportation for after-school activities	6%
Changed school policies	3%

*Note: Percentages may add up to more than 100% due to programs reporting two or more of these.*

## Budgets

Last year, new budget forms were designed and procedures set in place to improve budget reporting. Standardization and technical support for budgets significantly increased the accountability for the funds, and provide standardized information. For the 123 grants recipients submitting evaluation reports, the NCDPI indicates that a total of \$15,360,000 in grant funding was distributed.

Figure 9 shows the categories in which expenditures are classified. Individual budgets, showing more detail within the categories, are collected by EDSTAR and forwarded to the NCCDP to aide them with budget revision requests. Of the 123 grantees, 114 reported their expenditures as requested, in time for this report. What they budgeted and what they spent are also shown in Figure 9. The NCDPI is working with the grantees that have not submitted their budget reports to help them complete and submit them.

**Figure 9: Total Expenditures for 123 Grant Recipients by Budgetary Categories**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Budgeted</b>	<b>Spent</b>
Personnel & Contracted Services	\$8,238,867.64	\$7,631,497.12
Supplies & Materials	\$1,064,412.61	\$1,088,744.17
Non-Fixed Operating Expenses	\$1,165,953.39	\$1,030,892.09
Fixed Operating Expenses	\$436,935.84	\$413,284.95
Property & Equipment Outlay	\$638,646.86	\$650,977.66
Services/Contracts	\$740,754.83	\$463,829.62
Other Expenses	\$873,539.07	\$638,326.08
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$13,221,711.34</b>	<b>\$11,979,824.60</b>

Grantees that did not spend all of their funds returned them to the NCDPI.

The 2008 grantees reported that an additional \$2,380,643 is supporting these dropout prevention programs from local funds and other sources.

## **Conclusions**

The 2008 dropout prevention grants are serving more than 70,000 students in 76 counties with prevention services. A total of 16,425 students were targeted for documented risk factors that the services are designed to diminish or eliminate. Together, these two kinds of services should decrease the dropout rate and increase the four-year cohort graduation rate.

The framework now exists for documenting fidelity of program implementation, whether targeted students successfully meet program benchmarks, and how many students benefit from preventative components of these programs. Nearly all of the programs have SMART outcomes for their targeted students. Programs linked to the well-targeted promising and effective practices are now documented. We can see a

correlation between those programs with 21<sup>st</sup> century Data Pillars in place and successful outcomes.

Most of the SMART outcomes make sense with what we currently know about who drops out in North Carolina. Further study would need to be done to obtain more information about what risk factors best predict who will drop out in different LEAs in North Carolina. The Dropout Committee and EDSTAR have designed a study; however, it was not funded.

The move toward using academic and behavior data to target students for intervention services may in and of itself contribute to reducing the dropout rate. We have also found that aligning services to needs using academic and behavior data can have immediate positive effects.

As the practice of using academic data to target students for academic interventions becomes more routine, and access to the most challenging courses opens up to students who are predicted to succeed, students who have been traditionally referred to as “at-risk” may begin connecting with school and developing an increased sense of self-worth. The academic opportunities that we give students are the greatest indicators of what we think they are worth and what we convey to the students.

## **Recommendations**

**1. All programs funded by the NC Committee on Dropout Prevention should continue to use data to identify students who will receive targeted interventions.**

Although the NCCDP has done much to ensure agencies articulate SMART outcomes for their programs, problems continue to arise in this area. These problems are sometimes based on a lack of understanding of educational standard measures, such as EOG scoring or grade level requirements for AP courses. More predominant – and more serious – however, is the lack of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Data Pillar that must be in place to identify the correct students for programs and provide meaningful measures of success. Data must be consulted to ensure individual students meet criteria for SMART outcomes.

**2. Whenever possible, programs funded by the NC Committee on Dropout Prevention should use EVAAS data to help identify students and assess progress.**

Although some evidence exists for identifying who drops out, it is not clear that all targeted groups are at risk of dropping out. EVAAS can tell us which students are not likely to be successful in core courses without additional help. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction is partnering with SAS to develop Graduation Resiliency, a software program designed to facilitate the early identification via an examination of research-based risk factors of students who may be at risk of dropping out of school. We could gain valuable information by identifying programs that were successful with students identified by EVAAS as needing academic help to succeed, or by the Graduation Resiliency software as being at risk of dropping out.

This information can be known and would potentially impact the effectiveness of dropout prevention funds. Such information would allow district personnel to apply for funding for specific dropout factors common within their district. However, school districts are not likely to keep records required for determining the effectiveness of interventions with these students unless they are assisted in doing so.

**3. The NC Committee on Dropout Prevention should continue to pursue funding for a commissioned study to identify programs and practices that “beat the odds” in encouraging school completion.** The Quality Standards and Assessments pillar of education initiatives include quality academic standards to ensure students are prepared for graduation and entrance into society as adults in a 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace. North Carolina currently has in place quality academic standards in its Standard Course of Study (NC SCOS). Meeting these academic standards are requirements currently necessary for students to graduate. It is fitting then, for most programs to help students reach the benchmarks as defined in NC SCOS. If a study is conducted to determine what services help students who are predicted by EVAAS or by the Graduation Resiliency software to fail to meet these standards, valuable information

could be gained. The NCCDP could use the information to provide clearer guidelines about what applications they would fund based on evidence of effectiveness for the students we can identify as needing help. The grant application process would be simpler, yet more effective, and might increase the level of innovation among the existing and partnering leadership that support the grant award process. Once finished, the study could be made an integral part of determining which areas to address toward dropout prevention. Funding for such a study is not forthcoming at this time, however.

[Meanwhile, granted agencies should be required to strive to achieve academic benchmarks. With guidance and appropriate data, most agencies could design programs to specifically address these areas. Assistance with data retrieval, interpretation, and setting reasonable benchmarks would improve the integrity of the grants.]

**4. The NCCDP, EDSTAR, and NCDPI determine criteria for establishing internal and external validity of promising programs that are considered for replicating, and establish a framework for disseminating information about the programs that will be shared as model programs.** Promising programs have been identified, but should be further reviewed for clear descriptions of interventions and fidelity of implementation. Benchmarks should be assessed according to a concrete rubric of quality standards and assessments relating to graduating from high school.

Program documentation has been designed primarily for accountability purposes, and may not be the way to communicate what is needed for replication. Best ways to disseminate information for programs to serve as models should be reviewed.

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# Appendix

## Organizations Funded in 2008

County	Organization	Type
Alamance	Alamance Burlington School System	LEA
Anson	Anson County Schools	LEA
Anson	Direct Action Media Academy - Morven	NGO
Anson	North Carolina PTA	NGO
Ashe	Ashe County Middle School	LEA
Beaufort	Beaufort County Schools	LEA
Beaufort	Purpose of God Annex Outreach Center	NGO
Beaufort	Wright Flight, Inc. - Beaufort County	NGO
Bertie	One Economy Corporation - The Hive	NGO
Bladen	Bladen County Educational Foundation	NGO
Brunswick	Brunswick Arts Council (and Brunswick County School System)	NGO
Brunswick	Communities In Schools of Brunswick County, Inc.	NGO
Buncombe	Buncombe County Schools	LEA
Buncombe	WRESA	NGO
Buncombe	YWCA of Asheville and Western North Carolina	NGO
Burke	Burke County Public Schools	LEA
Cabarrus	Boys & Girls Club of Cabarrus County	NGO
Cabarrus	Cabarrus County Opportunity School at the Glenn Center	LEA
Cabarrus	Kannapolis City Schools	LEA
Caldwell	Communities In Schools of Caldwell County, Inc.	NGO
Carteret	Carteret County Public Schools	LEA

County	Organization	Type
Catawba	Hickory Public Schools	LEA
Chatham	Chatham County Schools	LEA
Chatham	Chatham County Together!	NGO
Cherokee	Cherokee County Department of Social Services	NGO
Chowan	Edenton-Chowan Schools	LEA
Cleveland	Cleveland County Schools	LEA
Columbus	New Hope Missionary Baptist/ Pathways to the Future	NGO
Columbus	Whiteville City Schools (Whiteville High School)	LEA
Craven	Havelock High School	LEA
Cumberland	Cumberland County Schools	LEA
Cumberland	Cumberland County Schools Indian Education	LEA
Cumberland	Helping Young People Excel - HYPE Collaborative	NGO
Davidson	Thomasville City Schools	LEA
Davidson	Communities In Schools of Lexington/Davidson	NGO
Duplin	Charity Middle School / Duplin County	LEA
Duplin	Duplin County Schools	LEA
Durham	Bridges Pointe Foundation	NGO
Durham	Durham Public Schools	LEA
Edgecombe	OIC, Inc	NGO
Edgecombe	St. Luke Total Community Outreach Ministries	NGO
Forsyth	Carter G. Woodson Public Charter School	LEA
Forsyth	YWCA of Winston-Salem	NGO
Gaston	Alliance for Children and Youth	NGO
Graham	Graham County Schools	LEA

County	Organization	Type
Granville	Granville Co Schools	LEA
Greene	Greene County Schools	LEA
Guilford	Communities In Schools of High Point	NGO
Guilford	N. C. A & T State University	Universities or Gov't.
Guilford,Forsyth,Rockingham	Operation Homework Inc.	NGO
Halifax	Hobgood Citizen Group, Inc.	NGO
Halifax	Ivory Community Development Corporation	NGO
Halifax	Together Transforming Lives, inc	NGO
Harnett	Betsy Johnson Regional Hospital Teens As Parents	NGO
Harnett	Harnett County Schools	LEA
Harnett	Think Smart Outreach Center, Inc	NGO
Henderson	Children and Family Resource Center	NGO
Henderson	West Henderson High	LEA
Hertford	Hertford County Public Schools - Winton	LEA
Hoke	Hoke County Schools	LEA
Hyde	Hyde County Schools	LEA
Iredell	Iredell-Statesville Schools	LEA
Jackson	Western Carolina University	NGO
Johnston	Johnston County Schools	LEA
Johnston	Another Step Forward (formally known as Adopt a School)	NGO
Johnston	Johnston County Department of Social Services	NGO
Jones	Jones County Schools - Senior High School	LEA
Lincoln	Lincoln Charter School	LEA

<b>County</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Type</b>
Martin	Martin County Schools	LEA
McDowell	McDowell County Schools	LEA
Mecklenburg	Cross-Country for Youth	NGO
Mecklenburg	KIPP Charlotte	School
Mecklenburg	The Urban Restoration and First Baptist Church- West Community Services Assoc	NGO
Montgomery	Communities In Schools of Montgomery County	NGO
Moore	Northern Moore Family Resource Center	NGO
Nash	Caught Before Fallen Dropout Prevention Initiative	NGO
Nash	Rocky Mount Family YMCA, Inc	NGO
Nash	World Tabernacle Church - The Impact Center	NGO
New Hanover	DREAMS Center for Arts Education	NGO
New Hanover	John T. Hoggard High School	School
Northampton	Northampton County Schools	LEA
Orange	Communities In Schools of Orange County	NGO
Pamlico	HeartWorks Children Medical Home Mission	NGO
Pasquotank	The Education Foundation for Elizabeth City- Pasquotank Public Schools	NGO
Perquimans	Perquimans County Schools	LEA
Pitt	Greenville Police Department - North Carolina	NGO
Pitt	Pitt County Schools	LEA
Pitt	Ray of Hope, Inc	NGO
Randolph	Randolph County Schools	LEA
Randolph	Communities In Schools of Randolph County	NGO
Robeson	Boys and Girls Club of Lumberton/Robeson County	NGO

County	Organization	Type
Robeson	Communities in Schools of Robeson County - Lambdin	NGO
Robeson	Sacred Pathways	NGO
Rockingham	Rockingham County Schools	LEA
Rockingham	Rockingham County Youth Services	NGO
Rowan	Communities In Schools of Rowan County	NGO
Rowan	West Rowan High School	School
Rutherford	Communities In Schools of Rutherford County, Inc.	NGO
Rutherford	Rutherford County Schools	LEA
Sampson	Clinton City Schools	LEA
Sampson	Sampson County Schools	LEA
Scotland	Scotland County Schools	LEA
Stanly	Albemarle High School	School
Stokes	South Stokes High School	School
Swain	Swain County Schools	LEA
Union	Environmental Expeditions	NGO
Vance	Citizen Schools of North Carolina Vance County	NGO
Vance	Vance County Schools	LEA
Wake	Community Partners Charter High School - Southern Wake Academy	School

Wake	Harriet B. Webster Task Force For Student Success, Inc.	NGO
Wake, Burke, Durham, Edgecombe, Hertford, Lee, Pender, Richmond	Futures for Kids (F4K)	NGO
Warren	The Warren Family Institute	NGO
Washington	Washington County School System	LEA
Watauga	Appalachian State University	Univ. or Gov't.
Watauga	Watauga County Schools	LEA
Watauga	The Children's Council - Smart Start	NGO
Wayne	ADLA, Inc.	NGO
Wayne	Dillard Academy Charter School	School
Wayne, Duplin	Mount Olive College	Univ. or Gov't.
Wilkes	Communities In Schools of Wilkes County	NGO
Wilson	Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) of Wilson, Inc	NGO
Wilson	The Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club of Wilson, NC	NGO
Wilson	Wilson County Department of Social Services	NGO

## **Promising Programs**

### **ADLA, Inc.**

### **12828**

#### **SMART Outcome**

By the end of the fall semester 2009, 60% of the participating students who previously failed their Math EOC will pass it.

#### **Data used to target students**

Data used to target students includes:

- EOC testing scores
- Progress Report grades
- Report Cards grades
- Math performance data
- Student behavior plans
- Student disciplinary records (D-track)

A total of 167 students were served, and 104 (62%) successfully met the benchmark.

#### **Services**

ADLA provided academic enrichment in Math in a structured environment conducive for learning and concentrating on academics, followed by our supplemental component that included classes that addressed behavior management, character education, peer mediation, problem solving, and effective decision making. Human resource development training and career readiness classes were also provided to students to enhance their basic skills, work readiness, and occupational skills. ADLA also facilitated all students' academic assignments that were sent from their base school to ensure students complied with the standard course of study and pacing guides. Students were also exposed to service learning projects and culinary arts training to increase their level of vocational competency.

## **Promising Programs**

**ADLA, Inc.**

**12828**

Continued

Commercial curriculum used included Curriculum Associates Test Ready Plus Mathematics, RESOLVE conflict resolution, and Channing Bete Company parenting curriculum.

## **Promising Programs**

### **Beaufort County Schools/Beaufort Co. Ed Tech Center\***

**12622**

#### **SMART Outcome**

By the end of the current school year, 75% of students participating in Pathways who previously failed a required math course will earn credit for a required math course and make progress toward meeting graduation requirements.

#### **Data used to target students**

Students' transcripts were used to determine which students would be targeted for this Smart Outcome. A total of 67 students were served, and 43 (64%) successfully met the benchmark.

#### **Services**

Direct instruction based on the NCSCOS and after-school tutoring. North Carolina Virtual Public Schools (NCVPS) and Plato courses are available for eligible students during the school year. Commercial curriculum also included Plato and Study Island.

## **Promising Programs**

### **Boys and Girls Club of Lumberton/Robeson County**

**12606**

#### **SMART Outcome**

By end of fall semester 2009, 75% of the students who scored below grade level in Math will score at or above grade level in Math during the course of the year.

#### **Data used to target students**

We collected report cards and talked with parents and teachers of the students to determine eligibility. A total of 80 students were served, and 80 (100%) successfully met the benchmark.

#### **Services**

Each student was engaged in 15 minutes of SMART Moves (our drug and alcohol prevention program). Then the members were paired up with mentors/tutors and spent one hour or more working on homework assignments. After the designated homework time, members spent time engaging in other activities with their mentors.

## **Promising Programs Buncombe County Schools\* 13174**

### **SMART Outcome**

By August 1, 2009, 75% of students who participate in the Mini-mester program will earn or recover needed credits and make progress toward meeting graduation requirements.

### **Data used to target students**

We looked at students' transcripts and worked directly with each of the six high schools' counselors to identify students who were not on track for graduation based on their course credits. We also utilized the district dropout data to determine students who would be good candidates to return to school and earn a diploma through our program. A total of 112 students were served, and 98 (88%) successfully met the benchmark.

### **Services**

We provided the following services to our students:

- Opportunity to earn new course credits during a summer term
- Opportunity to recover course credits using online modules during this summer term
- Opportunity to make-up credits lost due to attendance
- Small class sizes, with intensive support from highly-qualified staff

## **Promising Programs**

### **Burke County Public Schools**

#### **13152**

#### **SMART Outcome**

By the end of the 2009-2010 school year, 90% of the 6th and 9th grade students who have poor attendance (15 days or more absent) during this school year (2009-2010) will evidence improved attendance.

#### **Data used to target students**

We used the number of absences of 6th and 9th grade students to determine whom to target. A total of 291 students were served, and 210 (72%) successfully met the benchmark.

#### **Services**

An Attendance Counselor was hired through this grant to identify 6th and 9th grade students with attendance issues. The Attendance Counselor then worked with students and parents to support and assist them to resolve issues related to poor school attendance.

## **Promising Programs Chatham County Together! 14124**

### **SMART Outcome**

Eighty percent of students served will complete their Graduation Projects.

### **Data used to target students**

Students were referred to us through each high school's guidance counselor, English teachers, and Graduation Project coordinators. These sources we used included

- Attendance records
- School discipline records
- Junior English scores
- First semester (2009) English grades
- Past records indicating class performance (particularly in English – both spoken and written)
- Personal file narratives which may indicate that the student is newly moved to the area or has been challenged by work completion requirements in the past
- Family history that indicates there is little support for the student at home

A total of 94 students were served, and 86 (91%) successfully met the benchmark.

### **Services**

We recruited, trained, screened and matched adult mentors from the community. We then found a suitable mentor for each student, taking into consideration the student's profile and Graduation Project subject. If the mentor was not an expert in the field the student had chosen for his/her Graduation Project, we also recruited the expert. After the suitable mentor was found, we matched the student with the mentor during a match meeting. At this meeting, the adult mentor, student and parent/guardian met and were informed about the requirements of the Graduation Project. We then created and coordinated a team between the student, mentor, student GP advisor and the student's family/or guardian(s). We offered personal assistance in the mentor/student

## **Promising Programs**

### **Chatham County Together!**

#### **14124**

Continued

relationship by meeting with the pair, if necessary. Numerous student workshops were held which focused on skills needed to complete the Graduation Project including:

- Presenting to a panel of judges
- Assembling a portfolio
- Creating a tri-fold visual aid for the judged presentation
- Writing a research paper
- Preparing the product portion of the Graduation Project.
- Frequently documenting the product portion (making a video of a performance, audition or a process.)

After the student/mentor partnership was over, if the student still required help in completing the project, we lent the student our assistance until the project was complete. All of our organization's video camera, color copier, art supplies, computers and meeting space were available to students and their mentors.

## **Promising Programs Cleveland County Schools \*\* 12678**

### **SMART Outcomes**

By 15 July 2010, 91.5% of the students in grades five and six who attend Kings Mountain Intermediate School and use the Classworks math software program will score at or above level 3 (proficiency level) on the math EOG for the 2009-2010 school year. Note that all students at Kings Mountain Intermediate School are using the Classworks math software. (This outcome was revised upward from the original grant that set it at 84%. The revision reflected EOG data from 08-09.)

By July 15, 2010 87% of the students in grades four and five who attend Marion Intermediate School and use the Classworks math software program will score at or above level 3 (proficiency level) on the math EOG for the 2009 -2010 school year. Note that all students at Marion Intermediate School are using the Classworks math software. (This outcome was revised upward from the original grant that set it at 78%. The revision reflected EOG data from 08-09.)

### **Data used to target students**

Data used to target students included EOG Math scores, AYP EOG sub groups, percent of students at proficiency level in math by sub groups, and each school's School Improvement Plan. A total of 1030 students were served, and Kings Mtn - 91.6%, Marion - 81.6% successfully met the benchmark.

### **Services**

All students at these schools rotated through the Classworks labs, spending 1 to 2 hours each week on math skill development using Classworks software, a commercial curriculum.

## **Promising Programs Communities In Schools of High Point 13026**

### **SMART Outcome**

By the end of the 2009-2010 school year, 75% of the students enrolled in the CIS Scholars Program who previously failed a course will be promoted to the next grade.

### **Data used to target students**

We looked at previous report cards and EOG scores to target students. A total of 97 students were served, and 97 (100%) successfully met the benchmark.

### **Services**

We do one-on-one counseling and group sessions with the students. Students are recommended for tutoring and encouraged to attend; we give incentives for improvement. We make calls and home visits are made to find out why they have excessive absences. Workshops are created for college and career information. Students are invited by the CIS program to go on field trips, participate in career fairs, learn job readiness skills, and participate in job shadowing. We also link them with the programs offered at the Latino Family Center.

## **Promising Programs Communities In Schools of Montgomery County 14058**

### **SMART Outcome**

By the end of spring semester 2010, 50% of the students who had 4 or more Out of School Suspensions (OSS) in the 2008-2009 school year will have no OSS in the 2009-2010 school year.

### **Data used to target students**

The pre-data used to target students were 8th grade report cards, noting the number and reason for OSS. A total of 50 students were served, and 49 (98%) successfully met the benchmark.

### **Services**

The program provided mediation through Graduation Coaches between teachers, counselors and administration. Students were mentored and counseled by Graduation Coaches throughout the year and were presented alternative ways of dealing with anger and acting out, such as anger management tactics and 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens material.

## **Promising Programs**

### **Dillard Academy Charter School**

**12966**

#### **SMART Outcome**

By the End of school year 2010, 70% of students who previously performed below grade level on standardized tests in math will score at or above grade level in math on standardized tests.

#### **Data used to target students**

Iowa Test of Basic Skills, Study Island benchmark assessments, and previous year's EOG test results were used to target students.

A total of 108 students were served, and 65 (60%) successfully met the benchmark.

#### **Services**

Our services included:

- Daily homework help
- Teacher-led and hands-on remediation activities
- Projects that include math as a key component of student presentations
- Social skills needed to normalize within the classroom setting
- Enrichment activities to help provide confidence needed to participate in the classroom
- Parent involvement training to increase parent emphasis on math and to help parents review math concepts with their children.

Commercial curriculum, including Study Island web-based instructional support and Smart Dots.

## **Promising Programs Duplin County Schools 13320**

### **SMART Outcome**

Middle Schools: By the end of the first semester, 70% of students who scored Level 1 or 2 on the Math EOG test will score a level 3 or 4 on the county-wide benchmark assessment.

### **Data used to target students**

Previous EOG scores and the EVAAS At-Risk list of students were used to determine eligibility.

A total of 177 students were served, and 117 (66%) successfully met the benchmark.

### **Services**

Services provided included:

- E.E. Smith and Warsaw Middle School: AVID elective classes
- Middle Schools: extra tutoring through plus periods
- Warsaw Middle: extra tutors for the plus periods and AVID Elective
- Warsaw Middle: Saturday school for extra class help

Commercial curriculum used included AVID--Advancement Via Individual Determination. AVID targets individuals who have the academic potential and desire to go to college but make lack home support and may have any number of other risk factors present as identified by the research of The National Center for Dropout Prevention (2007) Those students make up the AVID Elective Class, which meets for 45 minutes daily and teaches the AVID methodology in addition to giving specific help with academic core classes through tutoring sessions.

**Promising Programs**  
**Duplin County Schools**  
13320  
Continued

In addition to those served directly through the AVID Elective, the AVID Curriculum is implemented first in some content classes and then as the numbers of teachers receiving training increase, spreads schoolwide (2010-2011). Content teachers have been trained in their subject area at the AVID Summer Institute and sustained by attending continuing Webex Trainings through the year. The AVID Site Teams at each school are providing direction and monitoring the implementation.

Both middle school sites use Study Island to benchmark and monitor progress on SMART goals. Study Island is also used to prep for the EOG.

## **Promising Programs Edenton-Chowan Schools\* 12662**

### **SMART Outcome**

By the end of spring semester 2010, 80% of students enrolled in the Life Coach Program for a minimum of one semester, who had passed less than 75% of their courses in the semester prior to enrolling into the program will have increased the percentage of courses passed.

### **Data used to target students**

Individual student report cards and transcripts were used to target students. A total of 82 students were served, and 61 (74%) successfully met the benchmark.

### **Services**

Our services included:

- Check attendance, call student if absent and, if necessary, go pick them up and take them to school.
- Checked progress reports and stayed on them to get assignments completed and turned in.
- Arranged tutoring after school and made sure they stayed by giving them transportation home, as well as offering incentives.
- Stayed in close contact with teachers and parents in an effort to establish education as a priority.

Commercial curriculum used included *Check & Connect*, a research based program from the University of Minnesota, that concentrates on building relationships with students to establish a caring, nurturing adult who supports them through their middle and high school years.

**Promising Programs**  
**Edenton-Chowan Schools\***  
12662  
Continued

We also used *Why Try?*, a research based motivational "Reality Ride" curriculum of activities that facilitate discussions and revelations regarding decisions about life and how to make appropriate choices that will impact future success.

## **Promising Programs Graham County Schools 13134**

### **SMART Outcome**

By June 2010, 65% of students who are participating in this program who were not proficient in 2008-2009 in either reading or math, or had earned failing grades in one or more core classes in the 2008-09 school year, will show improved proficiency as indicated on EOG/EOC tests and end of semester /year report cards.

### **Data used to target students**

We considered EOG/EOC data from 2008-09 and also considered academic grades for targeted students. Additionally, we considered retention records and teacher referrals. A total of 101 students were served, and 68 (67%) successfully met the benchmark.

### **Services**

The following services were provided for this group of students:

- Study Island, Discovery Education online academic programming
- Mentoring and supportive services to encourage student motivation
- Peer tutors and adult tutors in deficit areas- in school and after school
- AVID curriculum
- Motivational activities - such as career/college field trips
- Intense focus on student interests and goal attainment
- Multiple family/community involvement activities
- Personal Education Plans per student
- Speakers/ presenters
- Credit recovery
- Home visits
- Specialized materials/equipment that was beyond the scope of the regular curriculum
- Service learning opportunities

## **Promising Programs**

### **Graham County Schools**

#### **13134**

Continued

Commercial curriculum used included AVID. AVID is a program designed to help students in the middle prepare for and succeed in colleges and universities. Students in the program commit themselves to improvement and preparation for college. AVID offers a rigorous program of instruction in academic “survival skills” and college level entry skills. The AVID program teaches the student how to study, read for content, take notes, and manage time. Students participate in collaborative study groups or tutorials led by tutors who use skillful questioning to bring students to a higher level of understanding.

WHY TRY-The WhyTry Program was developed to improve student retention, academic performance, and school climate. Struggling students are invited into the WhyTry course, where they learn some of the critical social and emotional skills everyone needs to succeed. For students, WhyTry can provide tools to help change patterns of failure and indifference and improve their high school career, and can help provide motivation to put in the effort to graduate and lower the anxiety about their future that often leads to self-defeating behavior.

DISCOVERY STREAMING PLUS- The largest K-12 digital media library available contains regularly updated multimedia content for all subjects from the Discovery Channel, as well as leading educational publishers including the BBC and Scholastic. Segmented and fully and easily searchable, these extraordinary resources integrate seamlessly into any curriculum. All content correlates to state and provincial K-12 curriculum standards, giving teachers the streamlined ability to select just the right content to satisfy local requirements.

**Promising Programs**  
**Graham County Schools**  
**13134**  
Continued

STUDY ISLAND- The Study Island North Carolina Standards Mastery and EOG/EOC Test Preparation Program is specifically designed to help students master the content specified in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. Study Island's focus on the Standard Course of Study enables students to improve their performance in all skill areas tested on the EOG/EOC Tests in grades 3 through 8 and high school.

## **Promising Programs Harnett County Schools 13062**

### **SMART Outcome**

By the end of the school year 2010, 85% of the students who have taken Algebra I or Geometry and failed will pass Algebra I or Geometry.

### **Data used to target students**

EOC Scores, EVAAS reports, student transcripts, teacher and principal recommendation, and information from NC Wise were used to target students. A total of 113 students were served, and 95 (84%) successfully met the benchmark.

### **Services**

Our services included credit recovery, peer tutoring, mentoring, and after-school tutoring. Commercial curriculum used included NovaNET, a computer-based, online learning system that links students with a curriculum, aligned with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, through the use of technology implementing proven teaching methods that offer flexibility to various learning styles.

## **Promising Programs**

### **HeartWorks Children Medical Home Mission**

#### **14194**

#### **SMART Outcome**

By the end of the spring semester 2010, 80% of the participants who scored below grade level on the EOG math test in the spring of 2009 will score at or above grade level on the EOG Math test.

#### **Data used to target students**

End of grade and end of year test scores in Math were the data used to target students.

Pre-data also included:

- Attendance records
- Collaborative agreements
- Course grades
- LEA and school dropout rate/number of students who dropped out
- LEA and school graduation rate
- Referral records
- Suspension records.

A total of 100 students were served, and 90 (90%) successfully met the benchmark.

#### **Services**

Services we provided included after-school tutorials, home work assistance, peer tutors, and extra time on the computers. During the day, students who were suspended had an opportunity to come to our Day program for credit recovery. Our partnership with the school system allowed us to link with their Math and Reading programs online. We would have a weekly meeting with the Principal of the High School and one teacher to review the students' process and challenges.

## **Promising Programs Greene County Schools 12820**

### **SMART Outcome**

By August 85% high school participants who failed one or more courses will recover missing course credits by enrolling in the Twilight School Credit Recovery Program from 3:15 pm-6:15 pm and be on track to graduate with their peers.

### **Data used to target students**

We targeted students who had failed one or more courses. A total of 91 students were served, and 83 (91%) successfully met the benchmark.

### **Services**

Services included virtual learning (Compass Learning and Apex).

## **Promising Programs**

### **Ivory Community Development Corporation \*\***

#### **12998**

#### **SMART Outcome**

By the end of 1st semester 2009-2010, participants in our program who were absent 20 or more days in the previous school year will be absent fewer than 10 days.

#### **Data used to target students**

Attendance reports and suspension referrals were used to target students for services. A total of 65 students were served, and 60 (92%) successfully met the benchmark.

#### **Services**

For students who were absent due to suspension, we offered an Alternative learning environment with counseling and individual academic studies. Students were credited for attendance. We also involved parents by assessing the reasons for absentees that led to suspension. Workshops for parents were provided with the collaboration of the School Parent Involvement Specialist. We empowered parents to understand their role in establishing their children's boundaries, rules, and expectations.

For the students, we provided counseling for skills development to avoid future transgressions. Attendance referrals from the school were address within the In-school-suspension class. We used the following practices:

- Mentoring/Tutoring
- Alternative Schooling
- Family Engagement
- School-Community Collaboration

Commercial curriculum used included:

- "STOP & THINK"
- Interactive Health and Decision Making Series
- National Dropout Preventive Network

## **Promising Programs**

### **Johnston County Department of Social Services**

**14076**

#### **SMART Outcome**

By the end of the school year 2009-2010, 75% of students had a GPA of less than 2.0 the previous school year will achieve a GPA higher than 2.0

#### **Data used to target students**

The end-of-school-year report cards were obtained through the assistance of the participant as well as through the assistance of the school itself to verify and determine which students to target. A total of 134 students were served, and 114 (85%) successfully met the benchmark.

#### **Services**

The services we provided included:

- Tutoring
- Transportation assistance
- Day care assistance
- Group counseling
- Individual counseling
- Parenting education
- College Fair information
- Health education
- Pregnancy prevention education
- Academic recovery assistance.

## **Promising Programs**

### **Johnston County Schools \*\***

#### **12874**

#### **SMART Outcome**

At the conclusion of the 2009 - 2010 School Year, at least 10% of students who had 16+ days absent the previous academic year will have less than 16.

#### **Data used to target students**

Data used to target students included tracking of attendance from daily reports issued by the NCWISE Data Manager at each school. A total of 298 students were served, and 110 (37%) successfully met the benchmark.

#### **Services**

The Student Advocate used the monthly summary reports to work together to address absences with students and parents through contacts, including home visits. Students with attendance problems were counseled on a plan of action for improvement.

Student Advocates held monthly grade level group meetings and personalized counseling sessions with identified students, focusing on high achievement and staying in school. Student Advocates met with targeted students to discuss consequences of being out of school and how good attendance directly relates to success.

Commercial curriculum used included AVID. AVID is an elective class offered to students who plan to attend a four-year college or university but need additional assistance to get there. The curriculum includes writing, inquiry, collaboration, reading, note-taking, study skills, career and college research, and preparation for standardized tests. Trained tutors also work with students during AVID to assist students in their academic classes; this support enables students to enroll in the most rigorous courses in the school. AVID students also take field trips to college campuses and cultural events such as the theater or museums.

## **Promising Programs**

### **Opportunities Industrialization Center of Edgecombe \*\***

#### **13064**

#### **SMART Outcome**

By the end of the 2009-2010 school year, 80% of the students will successfully complete their 5 or 10 day suspension in the HOPE Program.

#### **Data used to target students**

Suspension data from the students' home school was used to determine eligibility. A total of 154 students were served, and 149 (97%) successfully met the benchmark.

#### **Services**

We provided classroom, teachers, supervision, and all the resources required to allow students to complete their assigned work sent by their home school teachers during their suspension.

## **Promising Programs Rutherford County Schools 12860**

### **SMART Outcome**

By August 2010, 75% of students who participated in ReStart will graduate from high school.

### **Data used to target students**

The official dropout report was used to identify students who had dropped out of high school. Student transcripts were analyzed to identify students who had failed to earn enough credits to be on track to graduate on time. A total of 48 students were served, and 38 (79%) successfully met the benchmark.

### **Services**

The ReStart Director counseled families about the struggles the student may be having (or had) in the traditional high school setting. A plan of action was developed for the ReStart student to finish his/her education at the alternative high school. Support was provided for the students throughout their enrollment at the alternative high school including flexible schedules and finding the student academic and/or emotional support to complete graduation requirements. No commercially packaged products were used; however, some of the students took courses through North Carolina Virtual Public Schools (NCVPS).

**Promising Programs**  
**St. Luke Total Community Outreach Ministries, Inc.**  
**12806**

**SMART Outcome**

By May 2010, 85% of students who participated in at least 50% of their suspended time in the S&L Alternatives program will demonstrate a reduction in the number of repeated suspension during the school year.

**Data used to target students:**

- Suspension Reports
- Behavior referrals
- Reports cards

A total of 63 students were served, and 58 (92%) successfully met the benchmark.

**Services**

Students received academic tutoring assistance, counseling, and life skills training.

## **Promising Programs South Stokes High School 13156**

### **SMART Outcome**

By the end of the 2009-2010 school year, 72% of tutored students who were found to be deficient based on averages less than 77 will pass the subject(s) they were tutored in.

### **Data used to target students**

Data used to target students included teacher-generated proficiency reports, progress report, and report card grades. A total of 296 students were served, and 181 (61%) successfully met the benchmark.

### **Services**

Students in this group received at least one 18- to 20-day session, and 30-minute daily tutoring sessions led by a certified teacher. Many students were enrolled in multiple sessions. Students served were assigned 16 to 73 days of tutoring, depending on their needs.

## **Promising Programs**

### **The Children's Council of Watauga County \*\***

#### **14204**

#### **SMART Outcome**

By the end of the school year 2009-2010, 90% of students who attended the pregnancy and parenting support groups will stay in school.

#### **Data used to target students**

Data used to target students: Students who were pregnant or parenting were targeted for this outcome. Referrals come from school counselors and social workers. We identified the need for a support program from records from community agencies that serve this population that indicated many of the teens do not complete their education when they have a baby. A total of 19 students were served, and 18 (95%) successfully met the benchmark.

#### **Services**

Services included on-campus support groups that meet weekly at alternating times, facilitated by WHS staff and Children's Council staff/contractors; support group housed at Children's Council throughout summer months to provide continuum of services outside of school year; access to teen specific resource library (teens give input as to what to have in library too); and teen specific childbirth classes and parenting classes. There is a strong collaboration with Watauga High School. Prior to this grant, there was no coordinated support for pregnant and parenting teens in our community. There was no on-campus support, and community programs were not collaborative in their approach. Students are now made aware of this program from a variety of sources. The support group is co-facilitated by interagency staff, and this allows for good communication regarding each student's participation and/or educational status. We invite community speakers to come and talk to the group, simultaneously raising community awareness of resources. We have started an interagency collaborative including WHS staff, health department staff, and the Children's Council staff to

## **Promising Programs**

### **The Children's Council of Watauga County \*\***

14204

Continued

discuss specific cases that may need extra support, as well as to brainstorm "outside the box" approaches to serving these students. Also, out of this collaborative approach, we have been able to identify the need for more intensive case management services for some girls to follow them through the baby's first year of life, when many of the obstacles are the greatest. This collaboration led to our application for continuation funding to expand the program and employ a social worker to work weekly with these teens to address their myriad of needs and assist them in accessing resources. We began implementing this new service in April of 2010 and plan to continue through June 2011.

The only commercial program that we are using is the evidence based Parents as Teachers Curriculum. From their website, "Parents as Teachers develops curricula that support a parent's role in promoting school readiness and healthy development of children. Our approach is intimate and relationship-based. We embrace learning experiences that are relevant and customized for the individual needs of each family and child. As a result, individuals and organizations who use our curricula benefit from our understanding of the evolving needs of today's families and children". Every teen parent can receive Parents as Teachers program free of charge.

## **Promising Programs Swain County Schools 12630**

### **SMART Outcome**

By June 2010, 70% of the students who had taken Algebra I and failed, and who register for Algebra I during the 2009-2010 school year, will pass Algebra I.

### **Data used to target students**

Course grades for Algebra I were used to indicate students who failed Algebra I. NC EOG Algebra I scores and student course registrations were also used.

A total of 16 students were served, and 12 (75%) successfully met the benchmark.

### **Services**

Students were provided with the opportunity for tutoring in Algebra I. Tutoring sessions were available before school, during SMART Lunch and after school with the high school math teachers. Opportunities were also provided for remediation and review for the Algebra I EOC. Peer mentors worked one-on-one with students for Algebra I.

Meetings with the parents and students were held to ensure students were registered and enrolled in Algebra I. The high school counselor made any needed schedule changes.

## **Promising Programs**

### **The Rocky Mount Family YMCA**

#### **14028**

#### **SMART Outcomes**

By the end of the spring semester 2010, 50% of the students who failed one or more courses will recover one or more credits.

By the end of the spring semester 2010, 50% of the students who failed one or more courses will be back on track to graduate with their cohort.

#### **Data used to target students**

NCWise, school report cards and end-of-course exams were used to identify students who failed one or more subjects and/or have been retained in their present grade. Data from NCWise have also been used to identify students who are not on track to graduate with their cohort. A total of 572 students were served, and 482 (84%) successfully met the benchmark.

#### **Services**

We provided the following:

- Credit Recovery
- Academic Skill Help
- Summer Programs
- Customized Graduation Plans
- Transition to High School Programs
- Counseling
- Peer-Based Mentoring
- School Wide Reform (Dropout Prevention Staff Training)
- Online Courses
- Sports Programming

**Promising Programs**  
**The Rocky Mount Family YMCA**  
14028

Continued

- Commercial curriculum used included We used Avid, VPS, Coach and Novel Stars.

# **Promising Programs**

## **Watauga County Schools**

### **12912**

#### **SMART Outcomes**

By the end of the school year 2009-2010, 75% of the students who were absent 30 or more days in the previous year will be absent fewer than 15.

#### **Data used to target students**

Attendance records were used to target students. A total of 41 students were served, and 35 (85%) successfully met the benchmark.

#### **Services**

Twilight School provided the opportunity for these students to attend school on a modified schedule, which alleviated various obstacles preventing them from attending school regularly. The ASC Center provided academic skill help, personal skills, counseling groups, education and consultation, crisis management, individual counseling, and family counseling. Commercial curriculum used included Nova Net and Ed Options. Both programs offer complete courses for students to take on the computer for credit acquisition or credit recovery.

## **Promising Programs**

### **YWCA of Asheville \*\***

#### **13146**

#### **SMART Outcome**

Eighty percent of the students who attend at least 60% of the program days that are offered during the school year will progress to the next grade or graduate.

#### **Data used to target students**

Data used to target students: All students referred to the program must have a Referral Form completed by the referring adult (school personnel, service provider, or other) who can speak to the students needs. That Referral Form has seven criteria that includes Excessive Absences, Excessive Tardiness, 2 or more Suspensions, Below Grade in Reading, Below Grade in Math, Suspected Gang Involvement, and Pregnant or Parenting Teen. There is also a section for Achievement Levels. We use this form to target students for our outcomes and for various interventions and services. We targeted 16 middle and high school students and 49 pregnant and parenting teens for this outcome. A total of 65 students were served, and 64 (98%) successfully met the benchmark.

#### **Services**

The core activities for middle schoolers are tutoring, homework help, art, health education (pregnancy prevention education, non-violent relationships, and AIDS/HIV education), and education enrichment (career exploration, art, and service learning). The YWCA also works to affect the student's ability to manage conflicts and decrease suspensions by focusing on positive social interaction and group cohesion.

The core activities for high school students are tutoring, homework help, art, health education service learning projects, group building activities, recreation, mediation and social skills building, Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Education, and AIDS education.

## **Promising Programs**

**YWCA of Asheville \*\***

**13146**

Continued

The core activities for MotherLove (pregnant and parenting teens) is case management, parenting, and life skills development, all with the goal of keeping young women in school.

Asheville City Schools Foundation and Warren Wilson College's Service Learning Program provide tutors and mentors for our students. FutureVision collaborates with the Asheville City Schools who provided FutureVision students with a screened and trained Academic Coach who helps their student stay organized, make personal and academic goals, and complete homework. FutureVision also monitors attendance and holds high standards for students to be a part of the program, they must attend a minimum of 2 days a week for high school and 3 days a week for middle school (recognizing that some older students may have part time jobs). FutureVision exposes its participants to a wide variety of cultural activities and partners with the Lake Eden Arts Festival (LEAF) in Schools and Streets program where musicians, poets, and other area artist come to program to teach. Commercial curricula we have used include Why Try? (road mapping goals and life skills, motivation), Model, Life Inc. (journal of goal-setting and career exploration), and the NC Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Curriculum.

## **Promising Programs West Rowan High School 12670**

### **SMART Outcome**

By end of Spring semester 2010, 75% of students participating in DINO who have failed one or more courses will recover credits lost due to failure.

### **Data used to target students**

Data used to target students included failure reports generated from report cards, transcripts, and teacher information. A total of 140 students were served, and 109 (78%) successfully met the benchmark.

### **Services**

Our services included the opportunity to recover lost credits through computer courses either in school, after school or on-line. Students were given the option of re-taking failed courses in English, Math, Social Studies, and Science either through an "in house" computer program "A+" during a remediation course during the school day, in the Alternative Learning Program room during the school day, after school in a computer lab, or they could make up credits at home on non-school time using an on-line program, "APEX" originally and now "Odyssey."

A+ is a computer program that can be used for remediation in Math, English, Social Studies and Science. The program adapts well to school curriculum, especially in a repeat of a course. Each course has approximately 30 applets, or "apples" as students prefer to call them. The program is very user friendly and is actually preferred by students over the other programs in use at WRHS. The downfall of A+ is that it must be done at school and supervised. Another drawback is that the higher mathematics are not found on A+. APEX is an online program that was used for 2008-2009. It had an advantage in that it was online and students could work on it at home or virtually anytime they had available time. It did not require a lot of teacher supervision; however, it was dropped by Rowan-Salisbury Schools in January of 2010. Students

**Promising Programs**  
**West Rowan High School**  
12670  
Continued

struggled with APEX for a variety of reasons, mostly the difficulty of assignments and lack of noticeable progress. Presently "Odyssey" is in use and seems to be somewhat better than APEX, but students still prefer A+.

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\* Promising programs to develop as modules that could be replicated; funded for a fourth year.

\*\*Promising programs to develop as modules that could be replicated; funded for a third year.

